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General Assembly

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Official Records

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Wednesday, 22 September 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

Co-Chair: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session)
Co-Chair: Mr. Joseph Deiss ..... (President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals

Agenda items 13 and 115 (continued)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Draft resolution (A/65/L.1)

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Viktor Yanukovych, President of Ukraine.

President Yanukovych (*spoke in Ukrainian; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): The adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration was crucial to the world's Governments' recognizing the common global nature of development goals and to resolving the problems facing humankind. Solidarity among States, mutual support and responsibility are key to the well-being of each country and of the world as a whole.

Today, we can say that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have become the real agenda for global human development and a general imperative for all Governments. From this high rostrum, I wish to reaffirm the will of the new political leaders of Ukraine to reach the Millennium Development Goals, as well as our commitment to the broadest international cooperation under the auspices of the United Nations.

The action plan of the new Government of Ukraine and the programme of reforms initiated by me as President both have a social orientation. They are therefore closely associated with the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Ukraine has set itself the task of carrying out comprehensive modernization of its economy and an active social policy. We have launched systemic structural reforms to establish a powerful and modern technology-based economy, ensure high living standards and protect the most vulnerable groups.

Mr. Haroon (Pakistan), Vice-President of the General Assembly, took the Chair.

The Millennium Development Goals are both guidelines and a system of priorities to implement the strategy of reforms in Ukraine, as they reflect the most dramatic problems that our society faces today. Committed to the Millennium Development Goals, Ukraine considers their achievement to be a major target for its national economy. The priorities of this policy are to ensure the well-being of the people, reduce poverty, achieve high health care standards, combat HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, ensure accessibility to high quality education, safeguard the environment and promote gender equality.

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Ukraine has established national targets for a number of the Millennium Development Goals that are even higher than the international ones. Over the past 10 years, Ukraine has adopted a number of sectoral and intersectoral programmes aimed at implementing the Millennium Development Goals. The Goals themselves have become a cornerstone of our social development strategy and a conceptual framework for Ukraine's cooperation with international contributors. We have submitted to the Secretariat our national report on the Millennium Development Goal indicators that were established for Ukraine. As can be seen from the report, Ukraine has made substantial progress.

In general, Ukraine is successfully meeting its objectives under the MDGs. Most important, by increasing minimum social standards, we have significantly reduced the percentage of our population living below the poverty line. Ukraine also performs quite well in the area of education, where we continue to carry out reforms. The health care situation has improved substantially, with notable achievements in reducing child mortality and improving maternal health. Our current objectives are to keep working on gender equality and improving the environment. Our utmost concern is the situation concerning the HIV/AIDS epidemic, a problem on which we must focus special efforts.

As in most other countries, our work to achieve the Millennium Development Goals was severely hampered by the global economic crisis, which affected almost all sectors of the economy and thousands of businesses and painfully impacted the well-being of millions of our fellow citizens. With pre-crisis sources of rapid growth exhausted, the only way for Ukraine to achieve sustainable development is to carry out decisive and comprehensive reforms to improve the competitiveness of our economy, combined with a reasonable and balanced social policy.

We thank the international community and the organizations and Governments that support the development process in our country. We are open to further cooperation. At the same time, we are ready to continue to work as a reliable partner of the international community in resolving global problems and achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

We feel a sense of responsibility for meeting the challenges of the world food crisis. Last year for the first time, Ukraine became a contributor to the United Nations World Food Programme. I am convinced that, in the very near future, our robust agricultural sector can make our country an important player in global efforts to overcome hunger in a number of the world's regions.

Despite the difficulties caused by the financial crisis, this year our country has been able to accumulate resources and assist the people of Haiti through the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund. Assisting countries in trouble is our traditional and constant practice at the bilateral level.

I believe that the Millennium Development Goals are realistic and attainable. To reach them, we need to seek consistent internal efforts by each country and close cooperation between all the nations of the world. Ukraine is ready for such efforts and cooperation.

The Acting Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

President Rajapaksa: Ten years ago, at the dawn of the new millennium, we reaffirmed our commitment to consolidating efforts in the spirit of collective responsibility in order to free our world from hunger, uphold human dignity and ensure sustainable coexistence with mother nature. We set for ourselves the goal of advancing progress in eight key areas by the year 2015.

Today, with just five years left, we have obtained mixed results. Amidst the multiple interrelated and worsening global crises that have confronted our world in the past few years, some countries have suffered setbacks in achieving those goals, while others have scored remarkable success. Yet we still have time to renew the political will and look for a way forward to reach the targets that have been set by harnessing our synergies. It is in that context that this High-level Meeting under the auspices of the United Nations assumes special significance.

Although each individual country has a sacred responsibility to ensure the welfare of its people, we cannot survive in isolation in an increasingly interconnected and globalized world. We cannot survive in isolation. Hence, achieving the Millennium Development Goals is ever more important to the collective interest.

The recent global economic and financial crisis has severely reduced access to external resources and private capital flows for developing countries. In such circumstances, there should be genuine commitment to fulfilling donor obligations. Unfortunately, the trend towards more restrictions and protectionist measures in trade, debt relief and access to technology is posing a challenge to development. We therefore need to act with a sense of urgency and partnership. At the same time, it is important for development assistance from external sources to continue to encourage sustainability.

Our national policy has been developed within the framework of global priorities that we consider to be appropriate at this time. In the South Asian context, some of our urgent concerns include food security, energy security and global warming. Building up buffer stocks of essential food items and ensuring price stabilization and the continuity of supplies calls for a more systematic approach to international cooperation.

We are convinced that, if economic development is to be sustainable, it must include emphasis on the protection of the environment. Green technology in industrial production is therefore one of the central needs of our time. Improving infrastructure in our villages and providing opportunity for social advancement are necessary to discourage mass movements of populations from rural areas into our towns. Gender equality and the breakdown of social barriers are features of a peaceful society. We believe that equity with regard to the distribution of wealth and access to essential services are hallmarks of long-term stability.

Since independence, social development goals in Sri Lanka, such as free health care and access to education, have been embedded in our country's overall policy framework. In addition, through my own vision spelled out in the *Mahinda Chinthana* — or "Vision for the Future" — we have embarked upon a 10-year pro-poor- and development-oriented framework to further consolidate and accelerate socio-economic progress, which is equally important.

It is our deep conviction that the wellsprings of our civilization, nurtured by the Buddhist tradition, should guide our approach to economic and social policymaking. At the core of that, there must be a sound scale of values. Nowhere is that better expressed than in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta, the final sermon preached by Gauthama the Buddha, in which he declares that the moral worth of any society can be assessed by a clear yardstick that consists of the quality of treatment meted out to women and children. In building a caring and compassionate society over the centuries, we have never lost sight of that ideal.

Sri Lanka has incorporated key performance indicators of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) into our national budget policies. As a result, Sri Lanka has already attained or is on track to attaining the MDGs despite formidable odds, including almost 30 years of a violent terrorist movement and the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, which brought massive devastation to my country.

In terms of universal primary enrolment and completion, we had recorded a level of almost 100 per cent by 2007. Gender parity in primary education has reached 99 per cent. In secondary and tertiary enrolment, the ratio of girls to boys exceeds 100 per cent. The challenge now is to further enhance the quality of our education to empower and prepare young people for productive employment. We have also undertaken vigorous measures to enhance computer literacy through a nation-wide project called Nenasala — "wisdom centres" — covering mostly rural areas.

In the health sector, our endeavour is to ensure that every expectant mother has a safe, attended delivery and to immediately increase the current 98 per cent rate in such births to 100 per cent. Infant and under-five mortality rates decreased from 32 per 1,000 births in 1990 to 11.3 per 1,000 in 2009. While our focus has been on countering tropical epidemics, such as malaria and other vector-borne diseases, we now need to pay adequate attention to forms of non-communicable diseases that pose a serious challenge to our health sectors. We would therefore urge that there be access to medicines at a reasonable cost and more predictable financial and technical assistance to develop local capacities in order to improve conditions for patients.

While we strive to achieve reasonable living standards, we must not forget the need to avoid treading heavily on the natural environment. The current spate of natural disasters and frequent floods in countries throughout the world are stark reminders of the effects of environmental degradation. We must, with a sense of urgency, reach consensus on curtailing

global warming based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and the Bali Action Plan.

While posing a threat, every crisis brings opportunity as well. Let us therefore resolve to use the opportunity afforded by this High-level Meeting to forge the strongest possible global platform to achieve the goals so necessary for our common good.

The Acting Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Valdis Zatlers, President of the Republic of Latvia.

President Zatlers: With five years left to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), this High-level Plenary Meeting is a key opportunity to strengthen our political engagement to reach the MDGs by 2015.

Significant progress has been made thus far towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals. Still, there are many countries and areas where additional efforts are needed. Improving results and targeting key sectors — such as gender, education, health and food security — are of the utmost importance. Latvia believes that in order to accelerate progress towards the MDGs, there is a need for a strengthened global partnership for development, as reflected in MDG 8.

National ownership and a holistic approach that takes into account individual goals and cross-cutting issues, such as good governance, peace and security, human rights and gender equality, should be maintained for the achievement of the MDGs. As a member of the European Union (EU), Latvia can affirm the readiness of the EU to focus efforts on the countries most off-track. At the same time, we should continue to reward good performance.

We have not managed to reach the goals of development financing, which must be met during the next five years. However, financial aid alone is not enough to ensure development progress in partner countries. Much greater emphasis must be placed on improving aid effectiveness. The cost of aid fragmentation and duplication can reach several billion euros annually.

Latvia is a new donor. We are gradually building our aid policy. But it is already clear that, if a country of our size is to have a positive impact, we have to concentrate on providing development aid in a smaller number of partner countries. In addition, we have to go into sectors where our presence provides the most added value and our experience and expertise correspond to the needs of the partner country.

As a member of the EU, we see the transfer of our still recent transition experience to our partner countries in the EU eastern neighbourhood and the Central Asia region as our comparative advantage and our particular niche in the EU's development policy. Our efforts have proved to be a valuable contribution that helps to promote good governance practices and sustainability in partner countries. Latvia is fully committed to the Millennium Development Goals, all the more so owing to the fact that Latvia's European Union presidency in the first half of 2015 will coincide with a pivotal year for global development policy.

Development aid can be effective only in countries where the policy and institutional environment is conducive to poverty reduction and sustainable economic development. Our responsibility is to support partner countries in their domestic capacity-building efforts. Latvia therefore welcomes Afghanistan's national development strategy. Latvia has been actively involved in supporting development processes in Afghanistan in the areas of the rule of law, the social and economic empowerment of women, water and sanitation. Together with our European partners, we remain committed to supporting the long-term development of Afghanistan and providing expertise that could be useful to Afghan domestic capacity-building efforts.

The road to development is not easy. The global community faces unexpected challenges to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The people of Latvia were deeply shocked by the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti, and contributed immediate assistance. I am proud that Latvia also finances Haiti's long-term development by funding a targeted recovery and rebuilding project in the central part of the country.

Achieving the MDGs requires political will and broad public support. That challenge is particularly true today when we face the impact of the global economic and financial crisis. We have to make an even greater effort to promote global awareness among politicians, especially parliamentarians, and the wider public. We highly value the efforts of the European Commission, and especially of Commissioner Piebalgs, as well as those of Latvian non-governmental

organizations, in educating society on issues associated with the Millennium Development Goals.

Global challenges call for collective responsibility to be assumed by all stakeholders, including civil society, social partners, the private sector and multilateral organizations. We are the ones who have to demonstrate strong and concrete political commitment to stepping up efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals. It is our opportunity. It is our duty.

The Acting Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ivan Gašparovič, President of the Slovak Republic.

President Gašparovič (*spoke in Slovak; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): The United Nations High-level Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is taking place at a time of exceptional global challenges. In the immediate aftermath of the global economic downturn, this summit provides us with an opportunity to reaffirm the determination of developed countries to participate in the development of partner countries. In my view, it can also give new impetus to our debate on experiences in the process of achieving the MDGs and the lessons learned from the global crisis.

In this new situation, Slovakia attaches the utmost importance to the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals. They reflect the most sensitive problems of our global world which, unless addressed, will hamper any endeavour to achieve sustainable security and social and economic stability and to ensure the quality of the planet's environment. Their successful achievement will create conditions favourable to the efficient pursuit of the principles of the protection of human rights and freedoms, whose absence makes the building of a just and prosperous society impossible.

The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development, including the economic development of our partner countries, depends on national ownership and good governance in developing countries. Each country is responsible for its own economic and social development. All national development policies and strategies must respect that basic principle, and all domestic resources must be effectively mobilized and utilized to that end.

Progress to date shows that the achievement of the Goals has been uneven in geographical and thematic terms. Moreover, the Goals are intertwined; the fulfilment of one is contingent upon the fulfilment of others. Progress is lagging behind, primarily on Goal 1, on the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; Goal 2, on universal primary education, mainly on the gender aspect of access to education; Goal 3, on gender equality, chiefly the empowerment of women; and, in particular, Goal 5, on maternal health. Serious challenges in this regard persist in sub-Saharan Africa in particular, and in the least developed countries in general. On the other hand, we have been hearing good news from South, South-East and East Asia, where robust economic growth is fuelling poverty-reduction endeavours across the region.

I am sure that most would agree that, based on a thorough analysis of the situation in the poorest countries of Africa, or of the world for that matter, the key task is to support economic growth and the creation of new jobs in developing countries. Of no lesser importance are efforts to improve the environment for good political governance, eliminate corruption and prevent armed conflicts. Two-thirds of the countries with the greatest difficulties in achieving the Development Goals are those that have recently experienced or are currently experiencing armed conflict.

I wish to highlight the importance of domestic efforts to be made by partner countries. In order to increase domestic revenue, it is necessary to improve tax administration and the transparency of tax policies, combat tax evasion and create conditions conducive to the inflow of foreign direct investment. One problem lies in the continued failure to reach an agreement in multilateral trade negotiations; the remaining barriers hinder the developing countries' access to world markets.

Climate change is the reason that the issue of food security is becoming increasingly important. Natural disasters have thrown millions into extreme poverty and hunger. I believe it necessary to continue investing in education and health care, in particular vaccinations. The persistently high maternal mortality in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa is particularly alarming.

Slovakia supports efforts to reduce and eventually eradicate gender inequalities. Factors relating to

women are of key importance to the implementation of the MDGs, since women represent two-thirds of those living in extreme poverty. That is why Slovakia welcomes the recent establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and appreciates the United Nations endeavours in the field of gender equality.

If the MDGs are to be achieved in all countries, it is necessary to look for ways to ensure more efficient financing, with particular emphasis on the key role of the private sector. The recent Third World Conference of Speakers of Parliament confirmed that, within the framework of debates concerning the drafting of national budgets, national parliaments should exert pressure and actively encourage national Governments to honour their countries' commitments towards achieving the MDGs.

The Slovak Republic, as an industrialized nation, is aware of its responsibility for global development. Within the framework of its medium-term policy for official development assistance (ODA), Slovakia annually allocates specific funds to support developing countries and those in transition, despite its tight budgetary constraints. We are determined to uphold this policy going forward. Although the ODA thus provided is not huge in terms of volume, our partner countries highly appreciate the activities and results achieved thanks to our funding. This is due in particular to our efficient system of aid provision, based on profound knowledge of local conditions and the identification of needs in partner countries.

As an example, let me mention the area of Southern Sudan, where Slovakia contributes, under Goal 2, to the effort to reduce illiteracy through gender equality-based projects for the education of children and adults. Other projects in the region focus on the prevention of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. In Kenya, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Viet Nam, Uganda, Zambia and Haiti, the development projects sponsored by Slovakia address the provision of comprehensive health and social care to those diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, thus contributing towards achieving Goal 6. The main objective of these projects is to provide decent living conditions to HIV-negative newborns and to improve the quality of life of HIV-positive mothers, children and adults. A significant part of the aid provided by the Slovak Republic has been directed towards achieving sustainable development, mainly in Kenya, Afghanistan, Mozambique and Mongolia. Slovakia's development aid is focused on the most vulnerable and the poorest segments of society.

I wish to emphasize that the provision of development aid is a responsibility not only of national Governments, but also of all components of civil society. The Government of Slovakia is in regular discussions with all stakeholders and places a particular emphasis on building awareness in order to win broad popular support for these activities.

In conclusion, I would like to effusively thank those representatives and delegations that have been actively involved in the preparation of the final document of this summit (A/65/L.1) for their work and effort. I believe that the document will give strong impetus to all towards mobilizing the necessary effort and resources for the final stages of the process leading to the fulfilment of such important and noble resolutions of mankind, as the Millennium Development Goals undoubtedly are.

The Acting Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Ricardo Martinelli Berrocal, President of the Republic of Panama.

President Martinelli Berrocal (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to address Member States and the international community. I have come here to reaffirm that the Republic of Panama is making progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals by the established deadline. The Goals are a platform and common vision for fair human development. if they are to be achieved, they will have to be shared by the countries represented here in an alliance of Governments, political forces, the private sector and citizens.

Our strategy for development is based on two pillars. The first is to deepen our economy's involvement in the international context; the second is to strengthen our human and productive capacities. Human resources are the key. In the midst of a global economic crisis, Panama has maintained significant growth thanks to good policies and competitiveness. As a result of Panama's coherent and balanced fiscal reform and a sustained country strategy, the three credit rating agencies — Standard & Poor's, Moody's and Fitch — rated Panama at the level of investment grade this year. Recently, the World Economic Forum moved us up by six points in the Global Competitiveness Index. We rose from 59 to 53, the largest jump in the past five years and the second

largest in Latin America. We have established Panama in the eyes of the world as an excellent place to do business and to invest.

Our economic growth is generating more and better jobs for our population. It is also attracting international companies and providing domestic companies with the opportunity to grow further. This raises our income, which means that we can invest increasing amounts in social programmes.

We have made significant progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The most relevant of these are the ones we would like to mention now. For example, in terms of the population living on less than one dollar a day, we have reduced the national figure from 19.6 per cent in 1997 to 12.63 per cent in 2008.

We have increased preschool enrolment in order to ensure universal primary education and the eradication of illiteracy. We have ensured that 93.2 per cent of the population has access to the basic services of drinking water and sanitation. We have created a "solidarity housing voucher" in order to enable a significant portion of those in the formal economy to buy a family home.

We have made significant progress in bringing about gender equality by reaching the goal of providing access to education in non-indigenous areas of the country. We have reduced unemployment and provided social security coverage for more than 70 per cent of our population.

We have reduced mortality from measles and other infectious diseases by 90 per cent thanks to a vaccination programme for children under five years of age. We have reduced the maternal mortality rate to below the average for Latin America and the Caribbean. We provide free anti-retroviral medications to those infected with HIV/AIDS.

We are fighting hunger and malnutrition, creating 22,000 vegetable gardens for schools and families. We have created the Advisory Council on Infancy, which promotes breast-feeding and healthy eating habits, thus preventing chronic diseases and decreasing the child mortality rate.

We have begun a programme called "100 for 70", which is a system that gives $100 a month to more than 92,000 people above age 70 who do not have a retirement pension or social security. We have also established a programme called Network of Opportunities, which benefits more than 70,000 families living in extreme poverty.

We have created the Universal Scholarship programme, which will benefit 800,000 students who, regardless of political leanings, can have access to education, thus reducing school attrition rates and strengthening the team that is made up of educators, parents and students. We have reformed the primary and secondary school curriculum, increasing the quality of education. This is the real driver behind equal opportunity and true social mobility.

We still have many challenges before us in order to achieve the MDGs by 2015. This is why we must strengthen our fight against poverty in indigenous regions and in low-productivity rural areas. In indigenous areas, 58 per cent of the population lives in extreme poverty, only 66 per cent have access to drinking water and 43 per cent have access to sanitation services.

We are creating a network of free medical care centres across the country, particularly in indigenous areas. We are building eight hospitals in key areas of the country. At the same time, we are adding 37 innovative primary health care centres, called MINSA-CAPSI, and eight social-security-funded polyclinics. We are also building a modern Hospital City in the capital, which will ensure better medical care for the country and improve all of our health indicators.

Panama, with the support of all world leaders together, will promote various health technologies and endeavour to ensure that medicines reach all the most needy sectors of the population. We will also continue to close the technology gap by providing free access to all marginalized sectors of the population. We are the first country in the world to have free border-to-border wireless Internet coverage available to all.

We undertake to conclude the Doha Round as soon as possible in order to shore up the work of local producers and open up international markets. We will also work towards the shared vision of and efforts aimed at reaching a significant agreement on global climate change.

The Millennium Development Goals are not negotiable, nor are they subject to conditions. They are above political and personal interests. I am very

grateful for the support the United Nations system has given us, as well as the support of its various entities in helping us to pursue these priorities. It is up to us to ensure that they are fulfilled without excuses, because they are essential to the social policy of my Government, and we will continue forging ahead until we achieve them.

The Acting Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency General François Bozizé, President of the Central African Republic.

President Bozizé (*spoke in French*): The Central African Republic, through me, is honoured to meet today with other countries of the world to take part in this exceptional event exclusively devoted to reviewing the progress made by each one of us over the past ten years towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Before I address the subject at hand, allow me to commend the Secretary-General for this very welcome initiative. I will also take this opportunity to convey to the delegations present the gratitude of the people of the Central African Republic for the attention given to our country by all the members of the international community during the trying ordeals we endured at the beginning of this third millennium and for the support they have provided to us.

The Central African Republic entered the third millennium with a major handicap. It was already bearing the marks of serious trauma and was on a downward spiral towards genuine chaos. The political, security and economic situation in 2000 was so disastrous that when, along with other stakeholders, we committed to this historic declaration, our domestic capacities had hit rock bottom.

Life expectancy at birth in the Central African Republic had dropped from 52 years in 1990 to 45 years in 2000, that is, 10 years below the African average and an average loss of more than one year of life every two years. Nearly 80 per cent of our population was living in abject poverty. The institutions of the Republic were merely a shadow of their former selves. Insecurity reigned throughout much of the country. It was particularly pronounced in those regions that bordered neighbouring countries, which themselves were in the throes of armed rebellions, where the circulation of small arms and light weapons flourished. On this specific and no less vital point, at the time we were facing, with practically non-existent resources, the double challenge of providing security for our citizens within our borders while trying to contain the effects of both internal and external armed rebellions.

In short, we already had a great lag compared to many other countries. Therefore, we had to reconstruct the bases of a State worthy of the name. We needed to reconstruct a State rid of the demons of division and destruction, a State capable of providing its people with essential basic services, and one capable of restoring its domestic forces in all areas of social life in order to address poverty, the true root cause of this insecurity and instability.

What have we thus been able to accomplish since 2003?

Our country report details the different steps taken over in seven years, while taking a hard look at the challenges that we have not been able to address over the last 10 years. It also takes into account the new challenges and underscores the magnitude of the efforts necessary to remain on track for the MDGs.

We are aware that with this great lag it will only be with great difficulty that we will be able to achieve one or two indicators, and then only if we continue our efforts. The statistics tell us that only the targets concerning access to drinking water and schooling for girls in primary school show encouraging trends. However, I have reservations regarding those statistics because the poverty rates in our country continue to be very alarming from all points of view. Despite all efforts to identify the constraints facing us, the level of actions to address pockets of poverty has remained extremely low, particularly in rural areas where mere road infrastructure is sorely lacking.

As we have all observed, restoring security and building peace are essential to solidify our institutions and to strengthen the relations between our fellow citizens and their institutions and social cohesion. Those requirements are necessary for any long-term effort towards socio-economic development. In fact, that consideration constitutes a heavy burden for post-conflict countries in general, one that quite frequently absorbs the bulk of the available domestic resources or resources have been mobilized by our partners. It also has to do with a complex relationship between the goals of peace and of development.

From the standpoint of political, economic and financial governance, the measures implemented with the assistance of our technical and financial partners have enabled us to make progress. Nevertheless, in certain areas such as security the reforms undertaken have not advanced at the desired pace, given the perils.

We are resolved to implement the priority steps of our peacebuilding strategy in order to ensure the best possible conditions to allow us to make up for the lag. But we are depending on a more active partnership, directed towards tangible results in terms of peace dividends for our people. That is what motivates our participation in the international dialogue on peacebuilding and strengthening of the State.

We endorsed the Paris Declaration in 2006, and we participate actively in the dialogue with the entire international community on fragile States in the g7+. We are convinced that if the resolutions resulting from all the consultations over the last three years are fully implemented, our hope will not be in vain.

The situation in the Central African Republic is not hopeless, but the specific experience of my country, and certainly that of many other post-conflict countries, clearly demonstrates that a lengthy post-conflict recovery period inevitably exposes States to greater vulnerability. Such a situation is fraught with unforeseen perils that greatly affect the meagre gains made and increase the risk of a reverse.

We are aware that achieving the MDGs in the Central African Republic is a challenge, for the financing needs have been estimated to be at least $5.5 billion. If we add to that the costs of various urgent matters arising from past and future natural disasters or humanitarian crises, as well as the loss of resources related to various external shocks, the costs of financing our MDG programmes will be more than $10 billion.

Nevertheless, we are determined to achieve some of those Goals and believe we can if, together, we focus our efforts and dedicate the appropriate means to the following four key areas. One, we must provide security throughout the country and build peace. Secondly, we must strengthen the State by increasing administrative capacities and the capacities of the young institutions of the Republic. Thirdly, we need to rapidly address the basic social service needs of our people, particularly in rural areas, which have been clearly identified in our development programme. Fourthly, we must mobilize the resources necessary to cover the needs identified by the integrated strategic framework, which harmonizes peacebuilding and economic reconstruction programmes.

Sharing the same concerns of all fragile States, the people of the Central African Republic are counting on international solidarity and appeal for agreement on a special partnership programme for fragile States. That programme must be sufficiently inclusive to take into account our respective needs. I therefore urge the development partners gathered here to support our efforts with rapid response instruments and appropriate resources so that 2015 will not be just one more failed meeting for many countries in difficulty, and particularly for the Central African Republic.

Long live international cooperation!

The Acting Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Ms. Laura Chinchilla Miranda, President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

President Chinchilla Miranda (*spoke in Spanish*): Ten years ago this Assembly produced a document that gave hope to many peoples. The Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), which was ratified at that time, endorsed six fundamental values: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and a sense of shared responsibility. On that basis world leaders adopted eight clear commitments: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which placed human beings at the core of our national and global responsibilities.

Today, I come to render account to the Assembly and to my people on what Costa Rica has achieved in that process. My assessment is optimistic. We are rightly confident that we will achieve the Goals despite the difficult circumstances and the fact that, as a middle-income country, we receive no share of international cooperation flows. However, we are also aware of our national challenges and that any achievement must be a spur for the future.

The first Goal called on us to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. In 1990, 9 per cent of Costa Rican homes were in such a situation. In 2007, we had brought that down to just 3.3 per cent. The world economic crisis had an impact on that indicator, but the growth trend is being maintained, and we want to further improve it. Our moral imperative is that not a

single Costa Rican should lack the means to feed himself.

Goal 2, on universal primary education, has been fully accomplished. All our school-age children attend educational centres. However, we are concerned that only 90 per cent of them complete the cycle, and we are working towards all of them achieving that by 2015.

The challenge is greater in secondary education. While it draws 83.6 per cent of our young people, only 40 per cent of them complete it. However, that dropout rate has been falling, thanks to transparent funding programmes for young people with limited resources. In addition, the Ethics, Aesthetics and Citizenship Project makes the learning process more attractive and relevant through sports and artistic and service activities. We hope that in five years secondary education will include 89 per cent and that the percentage of graduates will have greatly increased.

We are also working towards universal preschool education, a greater impetus to technical education and vocational training, regular use of information and communications technologies in classrooms, homes and communities, and universal, good quality access to digital networks.

To make progress on all those goals, we have substantially increased investment in several areas. Resources allocated to education have increased from 3.8 per cent of the gross domestic product in 1990 to 6.8 per cent last year, and we are committed to raising that to 8 per cent of the gross domestic product by 2014.

As the first woman President in the history of Costa Rica, I feel particularly proud of our progress on Goal 3: the participation of women in public life, which has increased year by year. Today, nearly 40 per cent of parliamentarians are women. Also, almost 30 per cent of the members of the Supreme Court of Justice are women. Our participation in the labour market has increased from 30 per cent in 1990 to 42 per cent last year, and it continues to grow higher.

Nevertheless, women are still the most affected by unemployment and work instability and irregularity. To a great extent, that is due to our difficulties in combining productive and reproductive roles. To overcome that obstacle, we are developing a childcare and early learning network, together with a comprehensive care network for the elderly.

With regard to Goals 4, 5 and 6, all related to health, we continue to make steady progress under a strong national commitment and policies developed over many decades. We are proud to have one of the lowest child mortality rates in the entire American continent. However, we are still not satisfied. That is why we are working towards a mortality rate for children under five years of 2 per 1,000 live births by 2015, and for those under one year, 9 per 1,000. We are also highly committed to reducing maternal mortality to 20 per every 100,000 pregnant women by 2015.

The impact of HIV/AIDS in the country is low, but we continue to strengthen prevention measures. In particular, we have increased the monitoring of pregnant women, and, since 1998, through social security, we have provided antiretroviral treatment to those who suffer from the disease.

Our commitment to the environment and sustainable development preceded by far the seventh Millennium Development Goal. Thanks to measures taken over more than four decades, almost 25 per cent of the national territory is under an environmental management or conservation scheme. We have recovered forest cover. We are investing to increase the proportion of electricity generated from renewable sources and the proportion of clean energy in overall energy use. My Government is promoting several initiatives so that we can generate all of our electricity from fully renewable sources in the next 10 years. We are working to reduce greenhouse gases, and we have proposed being a carbon-neutral country.

Today, practically 100 per cent of the population has access to water from improved sources, but we want that water to reach decent homes in all cases everywhere through mortgage credit schemes and subsidies for low- and medium-income families.

Costa Rica recognizes, and has demonstrated to the world, that sustainable human development must be supported through democratic governance, the rule of law, transparency, respect for human rights, and peace and security. It also requires an intelligent linkage among growth in production, education, health care, innovation, respect for the environment and the reduction of poverty. We take those responsibilities very seriously, and we do not blame others for our problems.

Nevertheless, sustainable human development also requires a true global partnership. Hence, the eighth Goal, which involves adequate and effective international cooperation. It concerns us that still very few developed countries are allocating 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product to development assistance. At the same time, while we understand that such assistance must focus on the more vulnerable countries, it should not exclude medium-income countries, which, thanks to their efforts, have been progressing towards higher development levels but are still vulnerable.

As President of Costa Rica, I am concerned about another serious challenge: organized crime, in particular drug cartels. If we do not stop their involvement, the advances in development will be worth very little. From this rostrum of commitments and hope, I call on the developed countries, especially the big consumers of drugs, to collaborate effectively with those of us that suffer from a problem that was not created by us.

Owing to our historic commitment to collective well-being, Costa Rica is well on track to achieve and even exceed the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. But this is not enough. Our efforts are also directed to the constant expansion of opportunities, to the reduction of social and regional disparities, to transparency, accountability, solidarity and freedom.

I would like to thank the United Nations system for its generous help accompanying us in this process, and I urge all countries that we advance jointly along this bright path.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Roza Otunbaeva, President of the Kyrgyz Republic.

President Otunbaeva (*spoke in Russian*): From this high rostrum, I would like to reiterate the commitment of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and to the achievement of its lofty Goals.

In spite of all the political and socio-economic hardships faced by my country, we continue to make efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by incorporating them into the country's national development strategy and action plans. We are confident that by working at the national level for the achievement of the Development Goals, we are making the world secure, the social fabric strong and the life of our citizens fitting for the twenty-first century. Our progress is stimulated, inter alia, by our neighbours and allies, who until only recently were developing States but today are among the engines of global economic growth.

The events of the past six months in Kyrgyzstan have clearly demonstrated the inseparable link among such elements as development, democracy and security. Life itself has put on the agenda of the current Government such issues as combating rampant corruption, implementing serious reforms, depoliticizing governance and restoring the rule of law. As a result of the violent inter-ethnic conflict that broke out in the south of Kyrgyzstan — instigated by destructive forces and supporters of the failed regime — over 300 people were killed, thousands were wounded and about 2,000 homes and 327 public buildings were damaged or burned.

We are making every possible effort for the rehabilitation and recovery of the areas affected by the conflict. We very sincerely thank all countries, organizations in the United Nations system and international banks that during the time of hardship for Kyrgyzstan have manifested their readiness to provide urgent operational, financial and humanitarian assistance to mitigate the negative impacts, to restore security and safety and to achieve social and economic stability.

We are hopeful that commitments made this past summer at the donor conference in Bishkek will be fully met. In turn, our Government is committed to ensuring full transparency and the highest degree of control over the use of any support funds provided. We believe it extremely important to learn from the experience of countries emerging from conflict that have succeeded in the process of peacebuilding, particularly those that have been able to restore the fabric of civil society, implement post-conflict rehabilitation and put in place effectively functioning governing structures.

The Kyrgyz Republic attaches great importance to developing open and responsible governance, improving policy implementation and eradicating mechanisms of corruption in areas of private business and public administration. We intend to involve in governance new management personnel, free from corrupt practices. To this effect, we are creating a civil

service fund, drawing initially on financial support from the Government of the Russian Federation.

Kyrgyzstan is the third country in the Commonwealth of Independent States to successfully implement the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. Drawing on that model, we intend to develop and put into practice transparency principles into the energy sector as well.

The country is making definite progress in the area of the empowerment of women. Kyrgyzstan's upcoming parliamentary elections, to be held 10 October 2010, will be conducted on the basis of the election code, which obliges political parties to observe and follow the 30 per cent quota requirement for women in party lists. One can clearly see the increase of the number of women professionals who occupy the highest government offices, including the President, Supreme Court chief justice, the national bank chair, the deputy vice prime ministers, ministers and governors. Kyrgyzstan welcomes the creation of the new entity, UN Women, which, we are certain, is going to open up space for the successful promotion and development of the world's women in the twenty-first century.

We hope for the early recovery of all countries from the economic crisis. We emphasize in particular the strengthening of the financial sector to bring new life and mobilize all creative mechanisms in order to promote an international environment conducive to sustainable development. Supported by our partners in the Group of Landlocked Mountain Developing Countries, which are vulnerable to frequent and diverse natural calamities, we advocate the practical implementation of the debt-for-environment swap mechanism. We urge the United Nations specialized organizations, particularly the United Nations Development Programme, to take the lead in the implementation of such programmes in the Central Asian region.

Experience shows the great role of trade in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Economic growth has been closely interlinked with trade, while poverty can be eradicated only by economic development. It is important for us developing countries with growing levels of trade to enjoy open borders as a way to free trade.

Some 90.4 per cent of the population in Kyrgyzstan has sustainable access to drinking water, including 99.4 per cent of the urban population. We are situated at the origin of the mountain rivers that give life to many millions in the countries of Central Asia. Therefore we believe that the preservation of glaciers and fresh water sources is a major responsibility, one shared by the downstream countries.

We support the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health just launched by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. This new initiative and the focused investments in this direction will be necessary for the practical achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Even though more than half of the State budget in Kyrgyzstan is devoted to social needs, we still fall short of achieving any visible reduction of the child and maternal mortality rates. Public-private partnership in maternity protection remains underdeveloped.

We believe that the global partnership is about, inter alia, volunteer activities of doctors from the developed nations, exchanging experiences in new treatment practices, and charitable activities sponsored by the global pharmaceutical companies providing access to the essential drugs and new medical equipment.

The Millennium Development Goals are every nation's development goals. They are the goals of survival and the preservation of life, of universal, high-quality education, of equal opportunities for all, particularly those who are most vulnerable. They are also the goals for a dignified quality of life. My country is committed to making every possible effort to bring positive changes for every citizen, in the next few years, today and right now. We will work tirelessly in synergy with the world, and we will do everything we can to not fall behind.

The Acting Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Ms. Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iceland.

Ms. Sigurðardóttir (Iceland): Ten years ago a milestone was reached in international cooperation: the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), providing common universal objectives for the global fight against poverty. Those Goals have helped us draw the world's attention to our mutual responsibility: the responsibility of all nations to help the poorest and most deprived citizens of the world. We need to listen to the voices of women and children worldwide. We need to hear the poor and marginalized.

It is our responsibility, as leaders accountable to our fellow citizens, to act in all of their interests.

During the last decade the global community has faced serious challenges, such as famine, disease, natural disasters and wars. Now we are slowly recovering from the most serious international economic crisis in decades. We have learned a hard lesson from the financial turmoil, and it has most affected those who are most vulnerable. We must not lose sight of fundamental values, such as a fair and just society. Short-term policies and benefits must not replace sound economic management and long-term stability.

But the challenges that developed countries face must not divert our attention from the burning issues at hand. Our attention should be focused on the extreme needs of those in the poorest regions of the world. No child should be homeless; no child should be deprived of nourishment or water. No child should be denied schooling or suffer from a disease that is preventable. That is the crisis that must remain at the top of our collective agenda.

Many developing countries have made great strides to improve the lives of their people. Their hard work and success stories are a reminder that progress can be achieved.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are key to the success of the Millennium Development Goals, not only as a specific target, but for the Goals in general. Women bear a heavier burden of the world's poverty than men because of the discrimination they face in education, health care, employment and control of assets. Women are also particularly defenceless against violence and exploitation in conflict situations. UN Women — the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women — is an historic step. We need to make it a strong and effective agent for the needs of women and girls worldwide.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Respect for human rights is vital to a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. We need to make a common international effort and respond more efficiently when human rights are not being respected. With leadership and political will we can achieve real progress and make a world free of poverty a reality.

The Acting Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Planning, Economic Development, Labour, Information, Grenadine and Legal Affairs of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): The purpose of this United Nations summit is to consider our individual and collective progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which we committed to achieving by the year 2015. We have also gathered, as we have in the past, to reiterate our political commitment to achieving the MDGs. However, the threadbare rhetoric of good political intentions is meaningless without a demonstrated and tangible fulfilment of past pledges.

Over the past 10 years, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has made tremendous strides in achieving many of the MDGs. Indeed, even in the face of an increasingly difficult international economic environment, we have achieved many of the Goals far ahead of schedule.

For example, Goal 1 codifies the overarching goal of our global pact — namely, the elimination of hunger and poverty. The standard set by the international community was that by 2015, each country should reduce by half the number of people who live in extreme poverty. I am proud to report that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has far exceeded this Goal, well in advance of the 2015 deadline. In the past decade, extreme poverty has been reduced from roughly 26 per cent of the population to a mere 2.9 per cent. That amounts to an almost 90 per cent reduction in indigence. To be sure, poverty, more broadly defined, remains a stubborn and vexing challenge in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. We have reduced non-indigent poverty by one fifth in the past decade, but 30 per cent of our population continue to struggle with less extreme forms of poverty.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has also far exceeded the Goal of universal primary education. Indeed, we have achieved universal secondary education, improving access from 39 per cent to 100 per cent in just five years. By 2015, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will have achieved universal access to primary, secondary and early childhood education. Our ongoing education revolution remains the

cornerstone of my Government's people-centred development policy.

Our health ministry has worked diligently to meet the relevant MDGs. Under-five child mortality has been reduced by almost half and now approaches developed world standards. The spread of HIV has stabilized in my country, and we remain hopeful that we will begin to claim measurable success in reversing its prevalence in the coming years. We have increased access to pipe-borne water from 70 per cent to over 98 per cent through prudent infrastructure investments. Internet connectivity has tripled, and we now have more active mobile phone subscriptions than we have citizens.

Despite these tremendous development strides, many obstacles still remain to achieving and sustaining the MDGs in our national, regional and international context. The collapse of the world economy, climate change, inequitable trade regimes and the impact of transnational crime all threaten our fragile gains.

From the perspective of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the most woefully unmet MDG is Goal 8, on a "global partnership for development". While developing countries continue their heroic struggle to advance in an increasingly difficult economic environment, many of our development partners have replaced their firm and measurable commitments of assistance with platitudes and empty rhetoric. The United Nations has reported that the developed world has provided less than half of the development assistance that it pledged to deliver. The developing world received $120 billion in 2009, far short of the $300 billion that was pledged. The Group of Eight Gleneagles commitments to Africa are $20 billion short. The official development assistance pledge of 0.7 per cent of gross national income remains a cruelly unfulfilled promise for all but a few countries. The limited trickle of available assistance is unreliable, unevenly distributed and heavily influenced by political, rather than development, considerations. The financial crisis and the failed Doha Development Round belie the Goal 8 pledge to develop an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system. From the perspective of the small, heavily indebted States of the Caribbean Community, the Goal 8 commitment to debt relief rings similarly hollow.

Further, I must emphasize that much of the developing world remains mired in a situation that is not of our making. The developed world's unmet pledges of development assistance were made well before those same countries plunged the world into a global economic and financial crisis. And their words of commitment were uttered before we had the full measure of the impacts of climate change. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines had no role in creating the financial and economic crisis. We are blameless in causing climate change. Further, the responsibility for the crises in food and fuel prices is not ours.

Yet, in a brazenly illogical and indefensible manner, those who are culpable for those crises unacceptably cite the very calamities that they created as the basis upon which they would avoid their commitments to developing countries. They point to the fact that poverty and unemployment are rising drastically in the world's major economies. They resort to thinly disguised code words like "aid effectiveness" and "governance structures" to mask their failings in meeting their own assistance targets. Somehow, we are expected to soldier on, with less assistance than promised and in an international environment that is hostile to development, while the creators of the crises and the deliverers of empty promises often look askance at our development needs.

The achievement of the MDGs is at a critical juncture. My Government's people-centred strides towards these Goals are vulnerable and potentially reversible in this period of increasing global economic hardship. Internationally, the MDGs are unattainable and unsustainable without a shrinking of the yawning credibility gap between what is pledged and what is delivered by our development partners. For the next five years, Goal 8 must be the engine of further development and the fulcrum by which we leverage our own national and regional best practices. The difference between achievement of the MDGs and failure is the difference between real commitments and empty promises, between responsibility and avoidance.

The great American President Abraham Lincoln once said, "you cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today". As 2015 approaches, no one is served by evasive words and deeds by our friends, our development partners. A renewed global partnership for development, evidenced by measurable and demonstrable efforts to honour past commitments,

is the only sure way that we can collectively attain meaningful and sustainable global development.

The Acting Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Jan Peter Balkenende, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Mr. Balkenende (Netherlands): Today we are looking back at the 10 years since the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were agreed. But we are also looking forward. We still have five years to go: five years to make a difference for all those people for whom poverty, hunger and shortages are still everyday realities.

Looking back, we have good reason to be satisfied with what we have achieved in some areas over the past 10 years. Poverty, child mortality and malaria have all been reduced. More girls are attending school. And more people have access to clean drinking water — a subject to which the Netherlands and, in particular, our Crown Prince are deeply committed.

At the same time, there is cause for concern, because our aims are ambitious, but we are moving too slowly. That applies in particular to the MDGs on reducing maternal mortality and achieving equality between men and women. Progress is lagging far behind, and we cannot allow that to happen, so we will have to do better. And we can do better, if we are prepared to think and work outside the box.

Too often the Millennium Development Goals are still seen as the sole responsibility of non-governmental organizations, Governments and multilateral organizations. That is unwise, because the commitment of the private sector is crucial to achieving them. Its knowledge and expertise in fields such as science, logistics and innovation enable us to push forward boundaries in development. Above all, however, the private sector is both a source of and a stimulus to employment, sustainable development and economic growth.

Research shows that economic growth accounts for 80 per cent of poverty reduction in the world. When per capita income increases, the poorest 20 per cent of the population also benefit, and the higher the growth is and the longer it lasts, the faster poverty rates drop.

The same free market principles also operate at grass-roots level. We will speak about that later today, when I host a side event on inclusive finance in the presence of Her Royal Highness Princess Máxima, the Secretary-General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Financing for Development.

So, we know that within certain parameters the mechanisms of the free market are essential for development. But we also know that investing in developing countries is still regarded by many as a risky business. So, to get economic growth in gear, the private sector needs a helping hand. That is why the Dutch Government is strongly in favour of public-private partnerships. We recently drafted a bilateral donors statement in support of private sector partnerships for development. Rather than viewing the private sector merely as a cash dispenser, the statement recognizes that it is an equal partner in development. We are in this together with the Governments of Austria, Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. The International Finance Corporation and the United Nations Development Programme are also involved.

The Governments of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba strongly support this policy of working with the private sector to achieve the MDGs. The upcoming Netherlands Antilles MDG report will not only emphasize this but will also strengthen existing partnerships.

In a recent letter to co-facilitators written jointly with the Chief Executive Officers of several Dutch multinationals, the Dutch Government emphasized the importance of innovative partnerships:

> "The Netherlands believes that greater collaboration between government and business could be instrumental, as it would combine the knowledge and experience of the public sector with the creative solutions and technical expertise of the private sector."

I am proud that so many Dutch companies are here at this week's summit to prove that our approach really works.

To achieve the MDGs, innovative thinking is needed in every field. This applies in particular to MDG 3 and MDG 5. Every year more than 350,000 women still die during pregnancy or childbirth, and in many cases women are still denied equal rights. Shortly before my departure for New York, I was presented with a petition signed by thousands of Dutch mothers who find it unacceptable that during this

summit more than 4,400 women will die during pregnancy or childbirth.

Like those Dutch mothers, the Dutch Government believes — and I believe — that ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women brings the achievement of most of the other MDGs closer. Burkina Faso is a good example. By addressing harmful practices and discrimination against women, by expanding and improving family planning services, by committing itself to removing obstacles to health care, that country was able to reduce the number of needless deaths substantially.

Human rights play a crucial role on the road to 2015. By ensuring equality and non-discrimination, we will give the poorest and most vulnerable groups access to basic services. Accountability, the right to participate and freedom of information will enable our efforts to meet the real needs of the population. And making things accessible and affordable will ensure that the MDGs are more than a short-term success.

The key is that we must combine our strengths and efforts as Members of the United Nations, as donors and developing countries and especially as Governments and businesses.

The Acting Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Emil Boc, Prime Minister of Romania.

Mr. Boc (Romania): It is a great pleasure to participate in this High-level Meeting dedicated to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The adoption of the MDGs 10 years ago was a high achievement for United Nations Member States and indeed, for the whole of humanity. In Romania's view, the MDGs are one of the most important acts to reform international relations of the past two decades.

Today we have gathered not only to measure progress and to speak about challenges ahead, but to garner our collective wisdom and will to push for the attainment of the MDGs by 2015. We are here today to demonstrate that solidarity is not only a slogan and that our work on behalf of our citizens bears the full mark of responsibility. At a time when science and technology are flourishing and the potential for human development has never been higher, it is a moral imperative for all of us to find solutions in order to eradicate extreme poverty, hunger and the worst diseases.

I also take this opportunity to commend the current and previous Presidents of the General Assembly for chairing the meeting, as well as the Secretary-General and the entire Organization for their dedication and commitment to the crucial task of achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

In 2007, Romania became a member of the European Union (EU). It has made irreversible progress towards the MDGs, reinforced in large measure by its accession experience and the programmatic mechanisms of the process.

In speaking of the MDGs, we must underline the tight linkages among them. The objective to eliminate poverty cannot be emphasized without noting its strong connection to health care and education. At the same time, no prosperous and equitable society can ever be built without ensuring gender balance and the empowerment of women. I would like also to underscore the interdependence between the MDGs on the one hand, and human rights, democracy, rule of law and good governance on the other hand.

Ignoring or sidelining the basic principles of human rights breeds violence and poverty. Democracy and the rule of law are the immune system of human society. Like a disease that cannot be overcome if immunity is low, poverty thrives in corrupt places. Achieving gender equality, health care, universal education or a clean environment is a matter not only of resources but of putting the building blocks of human rights and democracy in place. Equally important, maintenance of peace and security, doing better work on conflict prevention and acting more strongly on peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction matters are crucial factors for achieving the development goals.

The notion of sustainable development based on a fundamental connection between economic and social development and protection of the environment is another hallmark of the current development framework. In this context, I would like to recall the perspective of the World Commission on Environment and Development, which in its 1987 report (A/42/427, annex) expressed the essence of sustainable development by affirming that it implies meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

This year, Romania will celebrate 55 years of membership of the United Nations. This membership

has been a good opportunity for Romania to prove its commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Indeed, during all of this time Romania and its citizens have been firm believers in the merit of nations working together for peace and the welfare of humankind.

My country has a proud history of pleading for tolerance and of building bridges and trust within the international arena. Whether by bringing together parties to conflict, overcoming dividing lines between East and West or promoting cooperation between developed and developing countries, Romania has stepped forward at every opportunity to enhance multilateralism.

Taking into account the remarkable cooperation achieved over the years at the global and regional levels, Romania has tried to use its best experiences to support the efforts of countries in transition. In this context, I would like to stress the importance attached by my country to regional cooperation as an efficient means of sharing expertise among participating countries.

In anticipation of this year's High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs, the Government of Romania decided to draw up a national report on progress in achieving the MDGs. The report will be a useful tool for fostering national efforts in this field. It reviews the accomplishments at the national level as well as ways to accelerate the process. This initiative is based on the Romanian determination to act in favour of the MDGs from both a national and an international perspective.

I would like to further highlight the importance of global partnerships for development in the overall efforts towards the MDGs. It is essential, in our view, that both donors and partner States assume equitable responsibility and ownership of development assistance actions and resources aimed at the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The Acting Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Sebastian Piñera Echeñique, President of the Republic of Chile.

President Piñera Echeñique (*spoke in Spanish*): In this Hall, where the histories and hopes of the whole world converge, I wish to speak on behalf of the heads of State or Government of Latin America and the Caribbean and in my capacity as President pro tempore of the Rio Group.

Without a doubt, this year, in which much of our continent is commemorating 200 years of independence, is an excellent opportunity to assess the progress made thus far, to renew our commitments and to face what the future holds. We therefore hope that this meeting will offer the opportunity for an exchange of proposals and successful experiences with regard to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular in combating poverty. One of every three Latin Americans live in poverty today, and the inequalities they face are excessive and a challenge that we will have to deal with.

I believe that never before has our continent had a better opportunity to face the challenge of eradicating poverty and underdevelopment. We have almost everything: a generous, large and fertile territory; abundant natural resources; two brother languages; increasingly stable democracies; and peoples that want to face this challenge and deal with the difficulties on the path towards development, peace and democracy.

As President of Chile, I should like to offer a brief assessment of the Millennium Goals. As regards achieving universal education, Chile has a system of 12 years of compulsory free education that is practically universal. We have made enormous progress with regard to higher education: 7 out of 10 students enrolled in institutions of higher education are the first in their families to be so. The challenge now is thus to ensure quality, not coverage.

We are also working to promote gender equality and empower women, and we are doing so first of all by ensuring full access the labour force by women, as well as their access to the public sphere: over 60 per cent of the jobs created in our country are for women. As regards domestic violence, an evil that afflicts the entire world, the "Chile Protects" programmes deliver coverage aimed at freeing us from this scourge. The same is true for the issue of including women in the public sphere, where we are witnessing a true renewal. Here, I should like to congratulate the former President of Chile, Michelle Bachelet, for having assumed the position of Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), where she has a great challenge ahead of her, and where I am sure she will do a wonderful job.

We have also achieved infant mortality indicators that are compatible with the most highly developed countries on Earth. On combating HIV and AIDS, we are reaching the target concerning prevalence among pregnant women, which means that no Chilean child today will contract this disease through transmission from the mother.

As regards environmental protection, we are working simultaneously on three fronts, including an ambitious plan for energy savings and an ambitious plan to promote renewable energy, in which Chile is extraordinarily rich. There is great potential for solar energy, as we have the sunniest deserts in the world; for ocean energy, as we have over 5,000 kilometres of coast; for geothermal energy, as we have so many volcanoes; for wind power; and for bio-energy. We are also developing the relevant institutions with the creation of a new Environment Ministry.

As regards extreme poverty, we have set ourselves the goal of eradicating extreme poverty during this Government's tenure, that is to say, over the coming four years, and to end poverty in our country before the end of the decade. We are doing this through two types of mechanisms: those that attack the root causes of poverty, creating better jobs, improving the quality of education and strengthening families; and, so that these mechanisms have time to work, those that soften the impact of poverty, through the Ethical Family Income programme, which will supplement the existing incomes of the most vulnerable families so that they are able to overcome their poverty. The challenge of eradicating poverty is not simply a moral imperative, it is the best investment that any country in the world can make to strengthen democracy, consolidate social peace and promote economic development.

Finally, in addition to the pillars of stable democracies, economies that allow for the full exercise of liberty and enterprise for our citizens and the achievement of a society with more equal opportunities, the challenges of the twenty-first century involve investing more and better resources in science, technology, innovation and enterprise.

I believe that with such programmes, we will be able to achieve goals that have eluded us during the first 200 years of our independence and be able to recommit ourselves to meeting each and every one of the Goals that the Assembly has set for itself for the millennium that has just begun. In this way, we hope to create true opportunities for material and spiritual progress for all of our compatriots and for Latin America that, I am sure, have never before been seen. With the help of God, we will achieve these Goals.

The Acting Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Minister of Sustainable Development and Minister of Tourism, Sports and Culture of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Mr. Douglas (Saint Kitts and Nevis): It is indeed a pleasure for me to represent the Government and people of Saint Kitts and Nevis as we undertake this very necessary and important collective review of progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These are significant goals to which we agreed a decade ago, to free our peoples from want.

In this regard, I would like to take this opportunity to do three things. First, I would like to share with you the extent of my Government's work and its ongoing commitment to human security and the dignity of all people; secondly, to reiterate our call for structured and meaningful global partnerships and cooperation to tackle the many challenges confronting our peoples; and, thirdly, to remind countries to fulfil their own pledges.

I need not remind this Assembly that Saint Kitts and Nevis is the smallest independent nation in the Western Hemisphere, with a population just under 50,000 and a land-mass of 104 square miles. Yet smallness has never been a deterrent to progress nor is it an excuse not to adhere to the highest standards of democratic governance, strict observance of human rights, sound economic principles and commitment to a high standard of living.

I am pleased to say that since the late 1990s, we have implemented internal mechanisms and policies which, coupled with citizenship engagement, has allowed us on an ongoing basis to be able to assess progress in fulfilling our own development needs, which coincide with the MDGs. What is this progress I refer to?

First, according to the latest Country Poverty Assessment Report, extreme poverty in Saint Kitts and Nevis fell from 11 per cent in 2000 to 1.4 per cent in 2009. Second, since 1972, Saint Kitts and Nevis has

enjoyed compulsory universal access to primary and secondary education and is presently a leader in universal early childhood education as well. Third, Saint Kitts and Nevis was among the first in the Western Hemisphere to establish a Ministry of Women's Affairs and, even before political independence 27 years ago, there were women in high office and decision-making roles. Today, women's empowerment and participation in all levels of policy-making and governance is the norm, and gender is not a limiting factor for assignment to key posts in Saint Kitts and Nevis. Fourth, the infant mortality rate in the last decade has shown an appreciable downward positive trend. Fifth, maternal mortality has been negligible during the period under review due to my Government's steady investment in the health sector, including capacity-building consistent with its own commitment to improve the quality of life of its citizens. Sixth, in terms of environmental sustainability, our determined policies have already resulted in implementation of geothermal and wind energy projects. Seventh, the Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS, of which Saint Kitts and Nevis is a member, is regarded by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS as an international best practice in combating HIV/AIDS. It is also renowned for its practices in prevention, treatment and care and, indeed, as an advocate for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against people affected by the disease. Eighth, on the issue of global partnership, due to diminishing official development assistance (ODA), Saint Kitts and Nevis has had to fund and sustain MDG programmes mainly from the scarce resources of the State. Therefore, we welcome the contribution of the Government and people of Taiwan and others to our national efforts to meet the MDGs through investment in agriculture, food security and technology. Such partnership, I emphasize, could be a model for developed countries, some of which have failed to live up to their own commitments.

I want to assure the President that our progress towards achieving the 2015 MDGs is the result of careful planning and prudent management. However, we are living in complex times with myriad challenges where, despite our very carefully calibrated macroeconomic policies, fiscal prudence and financial programmes, our best efforts and best practices are often undermined by external forces, as we have witnessed since the onset in 2008 of the global financial crisis and economic meltdown. Likewise, progress made through costly investments can be blown away in a matter of minutes leaving our small vulnerable economy to the mercy of an already tight financial market and the unavailability of grants or concessional loans. This has been exacerbated by the unfair calculation of our gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, which places Saint Kitts and Nevis in a higher bracket than reality justifiably supports.

Like other nations, despite our careful efforts to craft and implement our own stimulus packages, this issue of the GDP per capita remains a major handicap, one that predates the global financial and economic crises. In this forum, once again, I emphasize that it is unfair, arbitrary, indefensible and economically destabilizing. For, while we manage our affairs responsibly, efficiently and competently, we are still denied access to crucial concessional loans.

In the case of Saint Kitts and Nevis, the crushing burden of the high cost of borrowing; the economic and social dislocations resulting from the closure of the sugar industry five years ago; the downturn in the global economy and the drying up of investment capital; the assault on our service sector; and the rising level of commercial indebtedness all threaten to undermine our progress in fulfilling the MDGs and to unravel that success of our small but progressive yet vulnerable country.

In addition to this and the impact of the economic downturn, as we speak, hurricanes swirl throughout this hemisphere. The regularity and ferocity of floods and hurricanes, the incidence of sea-level rise and other catastrophic events are all bold reminders that the consequences of climate change are real.

However, the fact that we are so greatly concerned about the unravelling of the progress made at this point in our review, just five years before the target date for the achievement of the MDGs, is not consistent with the spirit of the Millennium Development Goals. I am not convinced that it is at all indicative of the constructive multilateral collaboration that we have been speaking about so boldly for the past 10 years.

So, I hereby encourage nations assembled for this review summit process to take appropriate action, whether in their legislative bodies or in multilateral agencies, to promote the kind of collaborative efforts that advance the common good, place real partnership above parochialism, and move our peoples further

along the path to personal growth and the fulfilment of their individual potential.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malta.

Mr. Borg (Malta): Ten years ago, we gathered in this same Assembly Hall to launch a process to give new hope to humankind. By adopting the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), our Heads of State and Government promised our peoples to meet eight important targets to eradicate or reduce extreme poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease, and to engage in a partnership for development. Our leaders acted collectively and with determination. Through our political commitment to action, we gave the poor and vulnerable populations hope and aspirations for a better future, especially by overcoming the challenges that they continue to face as a result of the global economic, financial and food crises, conflicts and man-made and natural calamities.

With only five years remaining in which to achieve our promises and our commitments to meet the targets of the MDGs by 2015, this High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly provides us with the critical opportunity to review our actions and contributions so far, to ensure that the progress gained in the past 10 years is sustained and maintained, and to agree on a coherent and cohesive strategy for achieving the MDGs in the next five years and beyond.

The Secretary-General has defined 2010 as the "year of development". It is therefore appropriate that this High-level Plenary Meeting has been focusing on what needs to be done to accelerate the momentum to achieve the MDGs by reducing the estimated 1.4 billion people still living in extreme poverty, the 830 million people still undernourished, and the more than 42 million refugees and persons displaced by conflict or persecution. Indeed, Malta received a number of those refugees during the past year.

The Meeting has also focused on ways of reducing the risk of death, disability or economic loss owing to natural disasters, including climate change; increasing opportunities for universal education; continuing to improve gender parity in enrolment in education; sustaining and accelerating the decline in the number of 8.8 million child deaths; achieving the 5.5-per-cent annual decline in maternal mortality; improving maternal health; and lowering the 2 million AIDS-related deaths. It has also considered how to ensure environmental sustainability by reducing the 30 billion metric tons of global emissions of carbon dioxide.

The *Millennium Development Goals Report* 2010 indicates that progress in achieving those Goals and towards meeting the MDGs in some regions of the world has been made. Those achievements are real, even if they are uneven. However, by putting as a priority the concept of human development through what the Secretary-General describes as nationally owned development strategies, policies and programmes, complemented by the overseas development aid of international development partners, the international community has gone a long way towards ensuring that the benefits of progress are widely and, where possible, equally shared.

At the same time, considering the financial and economic upheavals that States Members of the United Nations have been facing for many months, it would seem that the road ahead is likely to be even more challenging. Therefore, a renewed effort must be made to strengthen our partnership so that, through unity and cooperation, we can achieve the MDGs, which, as the Secretary-General stated in the foreword to the Report, "will put us on a fast track to a world that is more stable, more just and more secure".

Malta joins other Member States in acknowledging the need to exert ourselves more strongly to achieve the MDGs by 2015. The achievement of the Goals would ensure that populations in middle- and low-income countries, including the small and fragile States, would enjoy the basic essentials and necessities of a decent life. While the MDGs were established during relatively stable times, when planning, growth and aid were relatively predictable, we are now navigating in unknown and uncertain waters. As we move closer to 2015, it is more than likely that the international community will have to devise and adopt an adjusted framework, as well as innovative approaches, in the search for and mobilization of development mechanisms to respond to those changes.

It would not be appropriate to take for granted continued support for the MDGs, even beyond 2015, without responding to the concerns and criticism voiced by several stakeholders. No development is

possible without building an environment conducive to security and cooperation, and no long-term security can be guaranteed without further developing the global partnership for development. Malta therefore believes that it is of vital importance that the review of the success and failures of the MDGs should be a constant process that reflects our changing political, economic and social environment, with the main priority of offering support for sustainable progress in poverty reduction.

Malta continues to fully accept its commitments and responsibilities both as a State Member of the United Nations and as a signatory of the Millennium Declaration. As a member State of the European Union and in its national capacity, Malta continues to provide its modest share of assistance in contributing to the development of developing countries.

The basis of that policy is Malta's belief that education, health and food security are the foundations of human and sustainable development, acting as catalysts for the achievement of all development objectives. For that reason, the Government of Malta ensures that its development policy focuses primarily, but not exclusively, on countries in the Horn of Africa and in sub-Saharan Africa that are facing major obstacles and difficulties in attaining the MDGs.

Indeed, over the past two years, among other contributions, Malta has co-financed several humanitarian projects in Africa, Asia and Central America. Based on the notion of fighting poverty through development, such projects address the most basic needs of local populations and communities and include a rainwater harvesting project in Uganda, a number of housing, educational and medical centres in Ethiopia, various educational institutions in Kenya, medical and educational facilities in Tanzania, and other projects in India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Guatemala, Peru and the Philippines.

Through a continued commitment and partnership, Malta will work assiduously and closely with other States Members of the United Nations to fulfil the Millennium promise to bring to reality the Millennium Development Goals.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor His Excellency Mr. Kanat Saudabayev, Secretary of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Saudabayev (Kazakhstan) (*spoke in Russian*): This summit takes on particular significance as part of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by the General Assembly 10 years ago, since people throughout the world expect decisions and outcomes from it that live up to their hopes for peace, security, development and prosperity.

Kazakhstan believes that the summit provides an opportunity for us to eliminate the gap between the socio-economic development of developed and developing countries. In that regard, we attach particular importance to the completion of the Doha Round of trade talks. Moreover, today, measures must be taken to stabilize and even out the levels of countries' technological development.

Today's meeting of the international community should address issues threatening the planet, such as the growing global energy crisis and the increasing threat of adverse climate change. In that connection, speaking from this rostrum, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, proposed discussions to elaborate a global energy and environment strategy for discussion at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2012. In our view, energy and environmental forecasting and developing an active partnership among civilizations on that basis are the most essential elements of a radical and innovative revitalization of the world community.

Today, as the State chairing the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Kazakhstan is contributing significantly to the achievement of the United Nations goals. We are undertaking security, economic and humanitarian initiatives both nationally and internationally. Under the leadership of its first President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan's successful economic, social and political development in 19 years of independence shows than the MDGs can be achieved with a clear development strategy, the political will of States and the close cooperation of the international community.

Kazakhstan has made progress not only in achieving the MDGs, but in taking on additional obligations in various areas as part of MDG+. Thus, since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) 10 years ago, Kazakhstan has demonstrated strong economic growth. It had already

doubled its economy by 2007 compared to 2000, and we intend to triple it by 2015. Owing to current economic measures and sound financial reserves of more than $50 billion, accumulated as a result of the effective management of its natural resources, Kazakhstan has successfully overcome all effects of the global financial crisis. At the same time, we have managed to sustain economic growth, reduce unemployment and fully meet all social obligations.

Under the State programme of accelerated industrial and innovative development, we intend to continue the technological modernization of our economy. In the past decade, the number of people with an income below subsistence level has been reduced to one fourth of what it was. Hunger has long ceased to be an issue in Kazakhstan.

There has been a steady increase in expenditure on education and health, more than eightfold in the past 10 years. The infrastructure of the education and health systems has been upgraded. A unified network of modern schools and medical facilities is being set up throughout the country. Enrolment of secondary schoolchildren is nearly 100 per cent. The literacy rate in the country stands at 99.6 per cent.

Health indicators have improved significantly. Life expectancy has increased from 65 to 68 years. The incidence of tuberculosis has decreased by 30 per cent. Maternal mortality has been halved, and the birth rate has increased by a one and half times.

We have attached particular importance to women having a greater role in the State's political life. The goal is to have women in 30 per cent of decision-making positions by 2016.

Kazakhstan has also made some progress in meeting its commitments on ensuring environmental sustainability. A sustainable development strategy to 2020 is being successfully implemented in the country. In order to bring together European and Asian processes of transition to sustainable development, Kazakhstan has launched the Green Bridge initiative, which provides for wide-ranging cooperation on the protection of transborder ecosystems and climate change adaptation. It will be submitted in greater detail during the sixth Ministerial Conference on environment, economy and social protection of the countries of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, to be held in Astana next week.

We appreciate the assistance provided by the United Nations system and the international community to overcome the effects of ecological disasters in the Aral Sea and Semipalatinsk regions. We note the importance of the new comprehensive development-oriented approach in addressing the existing set of tasks.

This summit is a test of our collective political will to implement the Millennium Declaration. Of course, countries themselves have the primary responsibility for achieving the MDGs. However, the international community can and should support national efforts. To achieve the MDGs, the quantity and quality of official development assistance must be increased. We welcome the steps taken by many developed countries to meet the commitment to bring their official development assistance to 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product by 2015.

Until quite recently, Kazakhstan received foreign aid, but today, thanks to successful economic reforms, our country has already joined the group of States known as new donors. We provide assistance to countries in the Central Asian region. In the case of Afghanistan, Kazakhstan provides $50 million in grants to train a thousand Afghan specialists in our universities and vocational schools, which will certainly help that country to achieve the MDGs. We believe that the joint efforts of the entire international community to further promote global solidarity and assistance to developing countries are needed to achieve the MDGs.

The draft political outcome document (A/65/L.1) to be adopted at the end of this Meeting is a step in the right direction. It will reaffirm the commitment by all Member States to the MDGs and reinforce our collective efforts and partnerships aimed at attaining all that we have set for ourselves by 2015. The Assembly has been mandated to facilitate the acceleration of progress towards achieving the MDGs. Kazakhstan is ready to contribute actively to this process and has set an example that proves that the Millennium Goals are achievable.

The Acting Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Boyko Borissov, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Mr. Borissov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in Bulgarian; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): From this high rostrum I would like to salute the

Bulgarian nation, which today celebrates its independence day. For 102 years this Bulgarian holiday has remained convincing proof that an entire nation can stand up for its sovereignty and develop successfully. I congratulate all Bulgarian citizens in Bulgaria and throughout the world on the occasion of this Bulgarian holiday and salute them for having never, ever denied help to those who were weaker or needier.

All of us gathered here to discuss the global challenges that affect mankind recognize that the modern world combines at the same time remarkable accomplishments which improve the lives of people around the world and deficiencies in our development, tending to downgrade it.

It cannot be denied that much has been achieved during the past two decades. Over 1.6 billion people gained access to drinking water, over 400 million people were relieved of the burden of poverty and advances in science and medicine have made vaccinations against incurable diseases possible while other diseases have been eradicated. At the same time, however, humankind spends $1.5 trillion each year in order to guarantee peace and security while one eleventh of that sum is invested in development assistance. We cannot shy away from the fact that millions of people in the developing world survive on 10 litres of water per day; against this, there are installations and equipment in the developed world that expend tens of times more water per hour. Such a world needs change.

From this high rostrum I would like to state categorically that Bulgaria is fully aware of the global need for development. We shall contribute within our capacity to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), because we are only too conscious of the importance of solidarity as a fundamental principle of policy.

Bulgaria's policy of engagement in international development cooperation clearly indicates our resolve to live up to the commitments undertaken at the major United Nations conferences on international development issues, as well as the June 2005 decision of the European Council on new targets for the volume of official development assistance provided by European Union (EU) member States. In spite of the additional economic and financial challenges that we face, my country continues to build its capacity as a donor of international assistance.

We in Bulgaria are ourselves confronted by many challenges, including problems relating to our own development and living standards. Nevertheless, we consistently fulfil the commitments we have made in the field of international development assistance, because we are very well aware of how important international solidarity is when one must resolve vital problems affecting the well-being of people around the world.

My country relies heavily on European solidarity and the opportunities it offers for developing our economy and improving the living standards of the Bulgarian people. That is exactly why we are fully conscious of the significance of solidarity and why we stand ready to provide it to other regions of the world that are in need. All our efforts to promptly restore the dynamism and economic prosperity of Bulgaria's economy as part of the overall European economic recovery process have proved the most efficient way of generating additional resources for development, as well.

Currently, the geographic focus of Bulgaria's development assistance is the countries of our neighbourhood: the Balkan and Black Sea regions. However, through our financial contribution to the tenth European Development Fund we will support as well — although indirectly — the development efforts of countries in Africa and the Caribbean and Pacific regions.

Poverty eradication with all its implications and dimensions is the main objective of Bulgaria's development cooperation policy. The sectors of education, socio-economic transition, health care reform, infrastructure projects, environmental protection and the preservation of cultural diversity are among the priorities of our development assistance efforts. For all of this to happen, we need more than just financial resources. We need experts; we need specialists; we need know-how. It is with such forms of assistance that countries with moderate financial resources, such as Bulgaria, can generate maximum added value, operating within a framework of better coordinated international mechanisms.

Here I would like to express my conviction that improving the quality of aid is no less important for achieving the MDGs than increasing its volume. That

is why our development policy is based on the principles of aid effectiveness which were laid down in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and further reaffirmed in the Accra Agenda for Action.

It is in our own hands that we hold the opportunity to change the world we live in. Hence, I am convinced that with a collective effort we can reach our common goal, namely poverty eradication. In fact, through the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals we can do more: we can right the wrong; we can stand the world on its feet, as it should be. Let us not deprive ourselves of this priceless opportunity.

The Acting Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Musa M. Abdussalam Kousa, Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

Mr. Kousa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like, on behalf of my delegation, to express our deep appreciation and gratitude for the efforts made to organize this important Meeting. I would like to convey special thanks to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and accurate report (A/64/665) on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, entitled "Keeping the promise", which indeed defines the purpose of our Meeting. I congratulate the President of the General Assembly on his election to the presidency at the sixty-fifth session and wish him success in carrying out his formidable tasks during the session.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the outgoing President for his efforts to make this Meeting successful and to the Permanent Representative of Senegal, His Excellency Mr. Paul Badji, and the Permanent Representative of Denmark, His Excellency Mr. Carsten Staur, for their key roles and tireless efforts as facilitators for the meetings and negotiations that led to consensus on the draft outcome document (A/65/L.1).

I express our deep gratitude to the Permanent Representative of our sister country Yemen, His Excellency Mr. Abdullah M. Alsaidi, for his wise stewardship of the Group of 77 and China and his role during the negotiations in defending the interests and objectives of developing countries in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. In this context, my delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by His Excellency Mr. Abubakr A. Al-Qirbi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yemen, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and to note that my country will have the honour of hosting the Group's Third South Summit early in 2011.

Ten years have passed since the international community assembled here at the Millennium Summit in order to consider the situation of the world's most deprived people — those living in poverty, affected by disease, and held back by illiteracy, gender inequality and other socio-economic conditions related to underdevelopment — and issues of international peace and security, in particular in Africa and the Middle East. The concept for that meeting grew out of the international community's realization that, because the world has now become one village, all States bear the responsibility for dealing with the challenges to sustainable socio-economic development. At the same time, the recent financial and economic crises affecting agriculture, industry, technology, science and economics in the developed countries have doubled the burden on the developing and least developed countries, which have already spent decades suffering the consequences of socio-economic underdevelopment and confronting obstacles to their efforts to build and maintain peace and security.

We are holding this Meeting at a time when it is possible to consider the options that are available to the international community and agree on a plan of action for the next five years to review and assess the pledges and commitments made as part of the global partnership for sustainable development framed by Member States in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and the Millennium Development Goals. This Meeting is also being held to discuss the social challenges faced by developing countries due to the financial and economic crises resulting from injudicious economic and monetary policies and financial speculation in the markets of the major industrialized countries. This is in addition to price fluctuations in energy, agriculture and food, as well as climate change, lack of security and instability, particularly in Africa and the Middle East.

These crises negatively impacted the resources necessary for development programmes and counteracted the gains made so far, despite the vigorous efforts of the developing countries, which had managed to make some progress towards achieving the

Millennium Development Goals. Full attainment of the Goals will remain elusive unless the political will matches the promises and commitments made to the developing countries. How otherwise will we be able to eliminate poverty for more than half a billion people before 2015?

We recognize that official development assistance registered an overall 30 per cent increase to $120 billion between 2004 and 2009 and that several of the poorest countries benefited from debt cancellation. However, the majority of donor States were unable to meet the target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product.

While achieving a reasonable economic growth rate is important, it is even more critical to bring about a real change in the infrastructure and social framework so that people's lives, food security, environment and health improve and the conditions for attaining all the Millennium Development Goals are enhanced. This can only be done by integrating confidence-building and cooperation in development efforts at the national level, including through bilateral and multilateral partnerships, and by enhancing and strengthening the role of the United Nations.

In this regard, we cannot deny the part played by the Group of Twenty in financial and economic governance at the international level. However, the United Nations will continue to play its leading and comprehensive role in the efforts of the international community to fight poverty and to contain transboundary crises. This is because of the Organization's international legitimacy, its wealth of experience and its capacity to deal with the costly global crises which require comprehensive responses at all levels.

The risk of a second economic crisis remains very real in view of the relative recoveries of some economies, which do not reflect the social repercussions of the financial and economic crisis. The best example of this is the sovereign debt crisis that affected some industrialized countries. The macroeconomic indicators do not fully reflect the social and humanitarian situation in the developing countries, especially in Africa, including increased unemployment, malnutrition, famine, child mortality, setbacks affecting women and youth, illegal immigration, trafficking in persons and drugs, and transboundary crime, not to mention desertification and drought. These issues have exacerbated political and security tensions, not only in some communities and countries, but, what is even more worrying, at the regional and international levels.

In this context, my country affirms the right of countries and peoples under foreign occupation to achieve self-determination, independence and sovereignty and to attain their social, economic and political goals. We are thinking above all of the Palestinian people. The reference to "recovery for all" should be taken to mean vulnerable peoples in a broad sense rather than a narrow and selective sense. We associate ourselves with the Global Pulse initiative of the Secretary-General and the aim of issuing early warnings about crises and narrowing the information gap, thereby enabling the Assembly to adopt timely decisions.

All these matters have been agreed to by my country as part of its support for the role of the United Nations, and in particular the General Assembly, to address international issues and their impact on development. Such issues include the concept of comprehensive international economic regulation to address the financial, social, humanitarian and security aspects of development.

Africa has suffered harsh economic, social and environmental conditions relative to other continents. As a result of drought, famine is a threat in many regions, especially in the Sahara and West Africa, which also suffer from inadequate investment in infrastructure projects, especially in terms of roads and transportation. My country has taken the initiative of investing in agriculture, mineral resources and also social infrastructure, including clinics, schools and roads, the most important roads being those that cross the desert and lead to the landlocked countries.

My country has also established and financed national entities to carry out many projects in such fields as energy, mineral resources and communications through the establishment of the Libya-Africa Investment Portfolio, with capital totalling $5 billion. This portfolio represents a consortium which owns a group of companies, banks and funds with responsibility for financing projects that support national development programmes in many African countries. My country also contributes large amounts to many development financing institutions at the regional and international levels.

With regard to social and economic development efforts in Libya, we have begun to reconsider our economic structure and political and economic international relations in line with regional and international economic and political transformations and our own geo-economic proximity to the European Union, the African Union, the Mediterranean Sea, the Middle East and Africa, as well as our status as an energy- exporting country, with harsh climate climatic conditions, located in the vast Saharan region. Through our social security and fair income-distribution programmes, our national efforts have been aimed at achieving improvement in living standards, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and expanding development to remote areas. Our country has adopted a number of policies to increase family income by setting a minimum wage, establishing a national programmes for small- and medium-sized enterprises and providing microfinancing for youth and women.

With regard to education, the percentage of students enrolled in basic primary schools stood at 98.2 per cent in 2007, of which girls represented 48.4 per cent and boys 51.6 per cent. That was achieved thanks to a free compulsory primary education policy for all citizens. Our gender equality policy, which is applied in the social, economic, political and military sectors, gives women their rights and provides support for the approach adopted by the State and communities to implement those rights at the cultural, social and economic levels.

With regard to reducing child and maternal mortality, Libya has made remarkable progress by implementing intensive vaccination programmes in the areas of vaccination, eradicating such diseases such as child polio and controlling measles. Our country is seeking to increase medical care in rural areas and to improve medical services in general, so as to follow up pregnancies and child deliveries under special medical supervision. The percentage of women provided with prenatal medical care stands at 98 per cent. Currently, life expectancy is at 78 years for women and 76 years for men. That reflects a significant improvement in living standards and medical health services in Libya.

With regard to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), our national centre for communicable and endemic disease preventions monitors a national programme for the prevention of AIDS. The programme has been successful in identifying infections, raising awareness about the disease and promoting preventive measures among citizens and our large numbers of illegal immigrants alike.

It is no exaggeration to say that our concern for the environmental situation in Libya is based on the fact that Libya occupies a very large geographic expanse with very few water resources and is situated in the so-called desert belt. In fact, Libya's experience is important and unique in that it has implemented an enormous man-made river and transport system project that runs from its desert interior through its entire national territory. The project's 4,000 kilometres of underground pipes provide water for drinking, irrigation, and urban use. Our country aims to develop other parallel large-scale projects for seawater desalination and waste water reuse. However, our neighbouring Saharan countries and our Saharan environment as a whole remains subject to the risk of drought, desertification and environmental vulnerability.

I would be remiss if I concluded my statement without referring to the importance that my country attaches to the development of a world partnership at the bilateral, regional and international levels with a comprehensive vision for cooperation and development integrating the social, economic, political and security dimensions. There can be no sustainable peace without sustainable development. Democratic governance and respect for human rights cannot be achieved without the implementation fulfilment of the obligations and pledges that the international community has assumed in international resolutions and forums. This is a shared responsibility to which my country is committed.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Luis Almagro, Minister for Foreign Affairs representative of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay.

Mr. Almagro (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude for the convening of this High-level Plenary Meeting on a review of the progress made and pending challenges in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The set of public policies and measures carried out by our national Government have substantially contributed to achieving progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. However, with only five years remaining towards the deadline set by the

Millennium Declaration, despite the efforts made there is still a long way to go in achieving the Goals.

Uruguay is seriously committed to reducing poverty, eliminating extreme poverty and moving towards greater economic and social equity. To that end, we have made serious efforts to eradicate poverty by implementing a series of social policies such as our social emergency plan, which provides temporary monetary assistance to groups living in extreme poverty. That plan was followed by a more comprehensive equity plan, which aims to expand the changes already begun, restructure the social protection system and initiate more wide-scale social reforms. Likewise, keeping in mind the importance of continuing work the effort to provide dignified and productive employment for all social sectors, we are currently developing our Uruguay work plan.

As a medium-income country, Uruguay participates in the One United Nations Initiative, an interesting undertaking to address inequality and support emerging trends that serve to promote social development.

However, we still face serious challenges in continuing to address the needs of the most vulnerable groups and ensure the provision of food to groups that are in at critical stages of their life stages related to the process because of biological reproduction and or social integration, as they are the ones most affected by insufficient nutrition.

Moreover, with regard to the international goal on education, I am pleased to report that my country has achieved that target. Nevertheless, there are still serious challenges with regard to our national goal of universalizing secondary education and expanding tertiary education. Likewise, our country is making efforts to improve the quality of education, raise the salaries of educators and invest in necessary basic infrastructure. In that connection, we have put in place innovative educational programmes that have produced very positive results. Those include the Ceibal plan to provide one laptop per child, which has reduced the digital gap by providing an Internet-connected computer to every child.

Moreover, in meeting the international goal to promote gender equality and empower women, Uruguay has demonstrated its commitment to achieving its national goal for eliminating gender inequalities in work opportunities and conditions and in public and private decision-making. In that regard, although between 2005 and 2009 we significantly reduced the unemployment rate for both men and women, there is still an imbalance in their unemployment levels.

To promote gender equality and women's empowerment, Uruguay has adopted a series of measures for reaching the Goals, such as the first national plan for equal opportunities and rights and the National Coordinating Council for Public Policies on Gender Equality. In 2009, we created a gender information system.

Uruguay places fundamental importance on the Goal of reducing the under-five mortality rate. In recent decades, major progress has been made thanks to control of diarrhoeic diseases and respiratory infections. Although the indicators in this area are very satisfactory, in recent years the Government has strengthened its policies and health programmes geared towards young children, which has reduced the under-one mortality rate by half over the period 1990 to 2008.

Through the creation of our national integrated health system, we are aiming to improve health coverage to population sectors that are considered priority, such as children and adolescents. We would like to mention other programmes directed at children and adolescents that have been implemented, such as the National Children's Health Programme, the National Adolescent Health Programme and the National Women's and Gender Programme.

There are also programmes for enhancing services for pregnant women, for children under three and for the most vulnerable sectors of society, as well as a tobacco control programme, as tobacco is one of the most important factors in determining children's birth weight.

Regarding the Goal of reducing maternal mortality by three quarters between 1990 and 2015, our country is on its way to reaching the Goal through the implementation of programmes and an active prevention and monitoring policy among pregnant women. The implementation of activities such as a contraception programme, a programme on health initiatives to prevent unsafe abortions, a programme for comprehensive women's care and plans for sex and reproductive health education, among other activities, have in recent years led to a significant reduction in the maternal mortality rate. It is also worth noting that in

Uruguay, care is provided in 90 per cent of pregnancies in the first and second trimesters and almost all births are medically assisted.

The fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases is a subject of particular importance for Uruguay. Outstanding among the achievements obtained in halting the advance of AIDS and slowing its spread is the reduction in cases of infection through blood contact and of mother-to-child transmission. In the area of prevention, a national programme for prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS has been developed. There are a number of actions to prevent sexually transmitted infections by means of early diagnosis, treatments for drug abuse and greater access to AIDS treatments.

We also seek to increase prevention through continuous public awareness campaigns on the feminization of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, as well as on the provision of antiretroviral treatment for those in need; these are mainly aimed at the youngest and most vulnerable sectors of the population.

Concerning other diseases, Uruguay has seen no cases of diphtheria, yellow fever, polio, neonatal tetanus or autochthonous malaria. The data show a sustained decrease in cases of echinococcosis and a reduction in tuberculosis. This has been the result of the national tuberculosis control programme and vaccination campaigns, in particular for hepatitis A and B and pneumococcal diseases. In addition to those diseases, Uruguay is engaged in a major follow-up and prevention effort for non-transmittable diseases such as cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and chronic lung and kidney disease, because of their considerable prevalence among the Uruguayan population.

Environmental sustainability is essential in the design of for long-term development and growth strategies. Our country faces serious challenges in terms of innovation and production of renewable energy. For this reason, international cooperation and technology transfer are particularly important. Here, we would like to highlight the increase in industrial energy consumption and the decrease in residential energy use. These significant and positive data mean a more efficient use of energy. It is also worth mentioning Government efforts to improve sanitation services and to extend their coverage to all parts of the country.

Finally, Uruguay would like to stress the importance of reaffirming the global partnership for development. The attainment of Goal 8 is essential for achieving the other Millennium Development Goals, since the commitment to development must be a collective one.

International trade, technology transfer, affordable access to medicine and an enduring solution to the problems of external debt are some of the areas that must be addressed in order to achieve the goals that have been set. Efforts made at all levels are crucial to achieve development. We also believe it is necessary to strengthen and establish millennium goals in the areas of culture and science. Such new goals in the cultural sphere would enormously advance social integration, and scientific goals would be of great importance, as science is the only path to sustainable development in both the short and long terms.

The Acting Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Sali Berisha, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania.

Mr. Berisha (Albania): It is a special pleasure for me to address this audience today and to present to the General Assembly the recent developments in Albania, along with our challenges and achievements in terms of reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

But before I do that, I would like to extend cordial greetings to Mr. Joseph Deiss, along with my heartfelt congratulations on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. Special thanks go to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the excellent organization of this General Assembly session.

As I was standing in this Hall today and watching this meeting unfold, suddenly memories of the General Assembly in September 1992 came to mind. As then-President of my country, I represented Albania: at that time, one of the poorest countries on the planet, with a per capita annual income of only $204 dollars, a totally failed economy and a level of unemployment as high as 80 per cent. Albania was a country where chronic and massive starvation were still present, where life expectancy at birth was getting shorter with passing time and where child and maternal mortality remained among the highest in the world. It was a country that, in the previous 45 years, had built 3.5 times more bunkers than residential apartments for its citizens. That was Albania 18 years ago.

As scholars have written, the unimaginable happens once in 20 years. But in my country, the unimaginable happened in less than 20 years. Today in this Hall, I am addressing this audience as the Prime Minister of a country that in this short period of time has increased its per capita income tens of times and now belongs to the group of countries with middle to upper income levels. Albania was once the most hyper-collectivized country on Earth; now, more than 80 per cent of its gross domestic product is generated by the private sector. During the past 10 years, Albania has reduced poverty from 25 per cent to 12 per cent, and extreme poverty from 4.2 per cent to 1.3 per cent.

Five years ago, taking into consideration its priority project of European Union (EU) integration, Albania revised and upgraded its Millennium Development Goals in order to realign them with the requirements of the EU integration objectives. To that end, in the past four years alone, Albania has increased budgetary spending for health care by 40 per cent, for education by 60 per cent and for social assistance by 80 per cent. We take great pleasure in noting that over 90 per cent of pupils who completed the obligatory nine-year primary education programme have continued their education by enrolling in high school, and that 70 per cent of the youngsters who graduated from the latter were admitted to the country's universities. The number of university students has tripled, and the Internet is accessible in every school throughout the country.

Life expectancy in Albania has increased to 77.96 years, and maternal mortality is several times lower than it is in some of the most developed countries. Child mortality has also shown a drastic decrease; nevertheless, it is still not at the level it should be. The level of child immunization in Albania has been among the highest in the world.

There has been tremendous progress in the area of environmental protection. Ninety-eight per cent of electricity and energy in my country comes from renewable sources. Despite the major world financial crisis, our country's economy has continued to maintain positive growth, standing at 3.5 per cent in 2009. Exports have grown by 62 per cent this year. Budgetary revenues are 13 per cent higher than they were last year, with overall economic growth expected to be 4 to 5 per cent.

Albania has created a very friendly environment for business and investment. At the moment, we are the European country with the lowest fiscal burden. In just the past two years, my country has signed several billion euros in investments and concessions. Albania's infrastructure has been totally transformed — for instance, when it comes to our road network and our water supply, energy, telecommunications and health care systems. My country is today a member of NATO and is making solid progress in the process of integration into the European Union.

Prominent persons in the world's global economy and finances have labelled Albania's development as having made a quantum leap. But I remain fully aware that, despite all those achievements, our country still has a long and difficult road ahead. Thousands of people in my country are still struggling against unemployment, which stands at 11 per cent, whereas others face poverty, and even extreme poverty, and endure the pain and despair and the tears they cause daily.

Building the country and its infrastructure necessitates more capital investment. Albania's path is in no way a beautifully paved highway. That is why reaching, or even going beyond, the MDG targets is for my country a secure path to a new horizon of development and EU integration.

These achievements by Albanian citizens are due first of all to their free initiative. They came about as the result of their hard work and rivers of sweat, for which I would like to take this opportunity to pay my most heartfelt tribute. But they were also made possible due to the deep and comprehensive reforms carried out in my country during recent years in the areas of the economy, health, education and social policy in general. In particular, they were due to our uncompromising fight against corruption and due to the reforms linked with that fight.

Anti-corruption reforms are crucial to ensuring the success and results of all other reforms. For me, the fundamental condition for reaching or going beyond the Millennium Development Goals is first and foremost a permanent fight against corruption. I believe that corruption is today the worst enemy of free people and free societies. In my country, the uncompromising fight against corruption has allowed us to double public revenue in less than five years. Anti-corruption reforms have helped economic and

other reforms to transform Albania into a secure country in Europe and into one of the most attractive places for foreign investors. I invite business people to seriously consider visiting my country and investing in Albania.

I take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to the United Nations for its continuous efforts against corruption, and in particular for the Convention against Corruption and the recent establishment of the Anti-Corruption Academy in Vienna.

On their way to building a democratic system and a free market economy, Albania and its people have had extraordinary help and solidarity from many friendly countries around the world. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to all those countries, their Governments and their taxpayers, for the great generosity they showed to my nation as it strived to emerge from the worst isolation that the world has known. From the bottom of my heart, I would also like to thank the United Nations and its agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations Development Programme for all the invaluable help they have provided Albania throughout this period.

Special thanks go to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his team for selecting my country to be a pilot country in the "delivering as one" project. I assure the Assembly that our selection has brought efficient cooperation between my country and United Nations agencies to the highest level, producing much better implementation of dozens of joint projects in numerous fields, which has helped my country to achieve the Millennium Goals and move ahead towards EU integration.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Paul Antoine Bohoun Bouabré, Minister of Planning and Development of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Bohoun Bouabré (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): It is a privilege and great honour for me to address the Assembly on behalf of Côte d'Ivoire and of President Laurent Gbagbo.

The report before the Assembly (A/64/665) is commendable, as it clearly and courageously sets out the challenges we face in attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as the measures to be taken to address — and perhaps to solve — them, only five years from the deadline we have set. On behalf of my delegation, I should like to convey my sincere congratulations to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the work that has been accomplished and especially for the initiative to hold this High-level Meeting.

As we take stock 10 years on, we must concede that there is still a long way to go for the majority of African countries, and that the chances of attaining all of the Millennium Development Goals by the 2015 deadline are slim. In spite of a domestic situation characterized by a crisis unprecedented in our short history, Côte d'Ivoire has steadfastly committed to implementing the Millennium Development Goals. While the results of Government activities do not, of course, entirely reflect the efforts that have been deployed, encouraging advances have been made thanks to the various programmes under way. In education, for example, Government policies to strengthen human resources on the one hand and to promote primary education on the other have allowed us to attain a net enrolment rate of 56 per cent over the period from 2002 to 2008.

The goal of gender equality is one that, without a doubt, we have a real chance of attaining by the 2015 deadline. In fact, the present ratio of 8 girls for every 10 boys represents real progress due to our primary education gender policy. The empowerment and promotion of women remains a priority for the Government. We give pride of place to the independence, participation and empowerment of women at all levels of national life and in the broadest range of areas and activities.

Significant progress has also been seen in the health sector, but it is still not enough for us to expect attainment of the goal of reducing under-five mortality. In order to improve the chances for success in this area, Côte d'Ivoire has decided to prioritize comprehensive vaccination campaigns, to improve epidemiological monitoring and to strengthen integrated care for childhood and infant diseases.

With regard to HIV/AIDS, the commitment of the President of the Republic has led to the establishment of a ministry specifically dedicated to the fight against the pandemic. Carrying out public awareness campaigns and providing care for sufferers, as well as strengthening coordination, follow-up and assessment,

have all yielded notable results. We note that the overall progression of the pandemic has been curbed, as prevalence has fallen significantly from 6.9 per cent in 2000 to 3.7 per cent in 2008.

The HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis pandemics continue to pose great challenges to Africa in general and to Côte d'Ivoire in particular. We all agree that these pandemics are not only a public health problem; they also seriously constrain economic and social development across the continent. Therefore, sustained efforts are needed to improve the quality of care and to improve treatment outcomes, along with continuing public awareness campaigns.

We take this opportunity to support the plea for a significant increase in the resources of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. In this regard, I should like to welcome the commitments made by the succession of donors who, from this rostrum, have announced increases in their contributions. I remain convinced that, if these promises are kept, they will greatly contribute to the success of the fight against these pandemics in the beneficiary countries.

In the decade since the MDGs were adopted, poverty has not decreased in Côte d'Ivoire; quite the contrary. Even though the trend has been slightly reversed over the past two years, thanks in particular to the renewed momentum of economic growth, the poverty index is not what we had hoped. Having been 38.4 per cent in 2002, the index was determined to be 48.9 per cent in 2008. That having been said, despite current financial problems and the constraints of managing recurring crises, the Government is continuing in its efforts to improve the quality of life of the people by connecting rural areas to the national electricity grid and by implementing drinking water provision programmes.

In the area of environmental preservation, efforts are being carried out to halt deforestation and to create conservation parks and nature reserves. We welcome the presence of the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, which manages the Taï National Park in south-western Côte d'Ivoire.

To conclude, I should like to underscore the importance of the ongoing economic reform in our country for implementing the MDGs and especially for ensuring that the results are long-lasting. The success of reforms and the immediate prospects for reducing the debt burden, which is 56 per cent of our gross domestic product, under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative will enable the Government to increase the resources available for basic social services and to step up attainment of the MDGs.

Five years away from the 2015 deadline, it would not be very realistic to wager that all of the MDGs will be met. However, domestic efforts must continue, and we must focus on the challenges of the MDGs, post-crisis reconstruction, robust recovery of economic growth and sustainable development. In this context, Côte d'Ivoire knows that it can count on the support of the international community and strengthened partnerships with donor countries to keep up the momentum and give new hope to our people. In this regard, the presidential elections to be held on 31 October 2010 hold great promise for Côte d'Ivoire.

The Acting Chair: The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Winston Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda.

Mr. Spencer (Antigua and Barbuda): Ten years ago, over 100 heads of State or Government gathered here in this grand Hall to adopt the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), which was described as a milestone in international cooperation. With a 15-year time span for its implementation, the Declaration was widely expected to inspire development and directly improve the lives of hundreds of millions of people. These are people who are struggling to eke out the most basic living and who are suffering the effects of poverty, gender inequities, ill health and environmental degradation.

Ten years have passed and we heads of State or Government — more than 100 of us — are gathered here again today to review progress, assess the obstacles and gaps and agree on concrete strategies and actions to meet the very same Goals and targets most of us agreed to in 2000. Ten years have gone by, and what do we, as a global community, have to show in terms of concrete results? No matter from what perspective one looks at it, something seems terribly amiss.

There are countless voiceless others not in this Hall who are also wondering and asking what has happened to our global commitment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They want to know why our global partnerships for development

have not delivered on their stated promises. With less than five years to go before 2015, why have the commitments related to the most important global Declaration made to the world's most vulnerable people not been fulfilled? Could it be that the globally agreed expectation that the Millennium Development Goals would spur action for poverty reduction, reductions in maternal and child mortality, improvements in education, gender equality and environmental sustainability remains just that — an expectation?

Despite the overwhelming evidence that progress towards achieving the MDGs, when measured in terms of concrete milestones, is fragmentary, I am not without hope that we as a community can deliver on these commitments. Let me therefore be very clear. I am not here to pronounce the MDGs dead or to bury them. Rather, I remain convinced that they can still be revived and achieved with a massive infusion of focused efforts and resources.

If there is one fact that we can all agree on, it is that something dramatic needs to be done, and done urgently, if the globally agreed MDGs are to be met. Ten years on, the inescapable truth that confronts us all is that the MDGs are on critical life support, and the international community needs to collectively step up the pace of action to achieve them. If we do not do that, the MDGs could remain forever abandoned and lost in that graveyard of lost and failed commitments. If, as many speakers before me have said, the MDGs are of critical importance to mankind, then it behooves us all to ensure that they do not simply wither on the proverbial vine and die an ignoble death.

I believe that the Goals represent human needs and basic rights that every individual on this planet should be able to enjoy. These needs and rights include freedom from extreme poverty and hunger, quality education, particularly for girls, productive and decent employment, good health and shelter, the right of women to give birth without risking their lives, and the right to an environment that is sustainable.

With five years to go, we are at a critical juncture. We are at a point where we can look back at what went wrong and take corrective action. We know that developing countries, such as my own nation of Antigua and Barbuda, were told repeatedly that the MDGs were achievable if nationally owned development strategies, policies and programmes were supported by international development partners. We have developed the national strategies, policies and programmes. Sadly, the support of our international development partners has either been slow in coming or has not come at all.

We know that the MDGs were intended to improve the lives of the poor, but such improvements have been painfully slow and any miniscule gains have been eroded by the climate change, food security and global economic crises. What makes this particularly heartbreaking is the simple fact that the world possesses the resources and knowledge to ensure that even the poorest countries, and others held back by disease, geographic isolation or civil strife, can be empowered to achieve the MDGs. Simply put, after 10 years, billions of people are looking to us to help them realize the great vision embodied in the Millennium Declaration. The simple but stark question is: Will we, as a global community, summon the courage to take the actions necessary to keep that promise?

As we look ahead to 2015, critical building blocks, particularly in the areas of trade and debt relief, which many in the developing world need if they are to achieve the MDGs, will have to be put into place. The Doha Round of trade negotiations must be completed. Progress towards reaching the targets of providing all the least developed countries with duty-free market access for their exports has to be accelerated. And a fair number of the middle- and upper middle-income countries, which are in dire need of substantial amounts of debt relief, need help to create more fiscal space for spending targeted towards the MDGs.

I believe that a renewed emphasis on trade is a critical element for developing countries seeking to rescue their battered economies and lift their people up out of poverty. One very important way in which our partners in the developed countries can help is to adhere to their international obligations. This could make a significant contribution to the maintenance of peace and security and towards ensuring that all persons, regardless of race, nationality, creed or gender, continue to believe in the international system and recognize that this system is for the benefit of all.

It is therefore important that the people of small developing countries be given good reason to believe that the international system is just and that it works for them just as it does for large, powerful, developed

nations. That is why one situation in which a small Caribbean nation has been placed is extremely unfortunate and must be remedied as quickly as possible.

My small developing nation of Antigua and Barbuda has sought to ensure that the trade rules agreed to by a majority of the international community, including the United States, are adhered to. In that spirit, after extensive consultations and negotiations, we brought a matter against the United States concerning online gaming before the World Trade Organization Dispute Settlement Body. Despite having been successful repeatedly at that level, we have yet to benefit. I therefore call on the United States to work with us to quickly resolve the situation and to arrive at a settlement that is fair and just to both sides.

The food crisis and the global financial crisis have exacerbated the external financing needs of countries like ours and have further constrained our capacity to service growing debts. Many countries now have debt-servicing obligations that are comparable in size to their gross national product or, in some cases, that dwarf the value of their total output. For them, my own country included, the need for debt relief is a top priority. For many of those countries, the debt distress has been caused by global crises not of their making.

This year alone an additional 64 million people will fall into extreme poverty. The number of hungry people has risen above 1 billion for the first time ever. We therefore need to build a bridge between available food supplies and people who are hungry. The bridge of safety nets is not something we can abandon. That is why in many developing countries, including my own, subsidized free school meals, nutrition support for mothers and young children and health, job training and community development programmes must remain national priorities. Those programmes are not only to combat starvation and malnutrition; they also have multiplier effects in supporting health, education and economic development.

In Antigua and Barbuda, the school meals programme has proven to be one of the most powerful food-based safety nets ever implemented. Those meals are often the only assured source of food for the children of disadvantaged households. And feeding programmes deliver much more by increasing school attendance, gender equality and educational achievement.

I am from a region where natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes are commonplace. Disaster preparedness through building resilience and promoting adaptation and risk reduction is therefore an urgent priority. We are constantly seeking ways and means to develop and deploy risk management tools to mitigate the negative effects of climate change and other natural disasters. Unlike our developed-country partners, we cannot avail ourselves of international insurance, capital markets or government budgets that act as contingency funds to minimize losses from natural disasters.

A mere five years remain until the target date for the Millennium Development Goals. I therefore call on the international community to recommit to the accelerated implementation of the MDGs.

The range of actions that must be taken includes supporting country-led development and effective governance; fostering inclusive and pro-poor economic growth, including access to modern energy services; increasing public investments in education, health, water, sanitation and infrastructure; scaling up targeted interventions, including social protection and employment programmes; investing in expanded opportunities for women and girls and advancing their economic, legal and political empowerment; enhancing access to energy and promoting low-carbon development; accelerating domestic resource mobilization to finance the MDGs; and ensuring that the global partnership creates an enabling environment for the MDGs, particularly by delivering on official development assistance commitments.

I want to thank the Assembly for its attention. I trust that we are all sufficiently motivated to renew our commitment to making the world outside this Hall a better place by achieving the noble yet practical Goals we have set in this regard.

The Acting Chair: I must make a request. We have very little time left. At 3 p.m., another meeting is being convened here in which the President of the United States and many other senior people will speak. In view of the fact that there are still many speakers on the list, I must request that the Assembly conclude this meeting. I ask that speakers restrict their speeches to five minutes. If they do not, I will have to start enforcing the time limit. We will not finish otherwise.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of the Congo, Mr. Basile Ikouebe.

Mr. Ikouebe (Congo) (*spoke in French*): Five years from the deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the opportunity afforded by this meeting is clear: we have to evaluate what we have done during the last 10 years and to trace the broad lines of what remains to be done to accelerate implementation.

The draft resolution (A/65/L.1) submitted for adoption at the end of our work clearly indicates the goal envisaged: to keep the promises made to our people, because the results mixed. Undeniable progress has been made and successes achieved, but in an uneven way. Many efforts are still required to make success universal at the right time.

We have taken on commitments at the national, subregional, regional and international levels. Many of our countries have made great sacrifices to move in the right direction. They have had to overcome various obstacles: lack of resources, weak national economies, natural disasters, wars, economic and financial crises, and so on. However, none of those obstacles should be used as an excuse or as a pretext for inaction. On the contrary, they should galvanize our energies.

It is time to call on our partners of the North, to invite them to keep their promises, particularly in terms of official development assistance, investments and the trade competitiveness necessary for sustained economic growth, without which the MDGs will be illusory for many of us.

When the MDGs were adopted 10 years ago, Congo was just emerging from a long period of civil war that destroyed the socio-economic fabric and infrastructures like roads, bridges, railroads, schools and clinics. We therefore had to rebuild everything, often at our own expense. Our post-conflict development programme was adopted and implemented. After long years of negotiation with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, we are now just at the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. We would like to thank all of our partners who have supported us in this long effort.

With the cancelling of most of our foreign debt, today we can accelerate the pace of implementing our programme for the poorest citizens, which was launched a number of years ago. That is why we remain aware of our ability to achieve in five years a reasonable performance rate for the MDGs.

On the whole, Congo, following the example of other African countries, has made remarkable progress in achieving the MDGs, especially in the areas of universal primary education, fighting HIV/AIDS and promoting sustainable development, even as we remain aware of the scope of the challenges that still must be met. However, more efforts are needed to combat extreme poverty and hunger, and maternal, infant and child mortality, and to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.

To meet those challenges, the Government is trying to bring the proportion of the population below the poverty level from 50.7 per cent to 35 per cent by 2015. The setting up of the national food security programme 2008-2012 and of the support fund for developing agriculture is part of this effort to reduce the proportion of the population that is suffering from hunger. In addition, Congo has invested in diversifying its non-petroleum sector and is implementing support programmes for income-generating activities for the most vulnerable people. Improving the business environment is also one of the priority areas in our efforts to promote the private sector and thereby to expand the national economy's productive capacity.

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Congo's independence, President Denis Sassou Nguesso has announced measures aimed at strengthening and speeding up all ongoing programmes. In particular, that entails raising low incomes by increasing the minimum wage by 25 per cent and adopting more favourable salary scales for State employees, beginning in 2011. In order to bridge the gaps in the education system, primary education for all children will be provided and the primary school enrolment rate, which still stood at 72 per cent in 2008, will be raised. Free access to textbooks and primary education will henceforth be provided.

Above and beyond the basic issue of rights, we in Congo consider gender equality a prerequisite to sustainable development. Our national gender policy and action plan will therefore be supplemented by a law on women's representation in decision-making forums. The law, whose goal is to enshrine gender parity, will contribute to lifting social and cultural

impediments that so far have hampered the achievement of full gender equality.

Maternal and child health is also the object of specific social measures. Those include free malaria treatment for pregnant women and for children up the age of 15, the ongoing construction of a large comprehensive treatment centre for women and children, free caesarean care and fistula surgery and other major pregnancy and delivery interventions. The goal of those measures is to ensure that women giving birth to new life do not die on the occasion of such a momentous event. Lastly, we also provide free HIV/AIDS treatment, especially as part of preventing mother-to-child transmission.

For quite some time Congo has clearly realized the stakes involved in achieving sustainable development. We therefore began very early on to implement policies intended to preserve and sustainably manage the forest ecosystems of the Congo River Basin. As everyone understands, this is a significant contribution to the global fight against climate change.

The Congolese Government is steadfast in its commitment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. For President Denis Sassou Nguesso, combating poverty is the cornerstone to securing human dignity and the country's independence. Nevertheless, the success of our efforts will depend in large part on achieving consensus between developed and developing countries on mutual responsibility, and on future innovative measures that might be identified, especially in the area of development assistance.

As we all hope, therefore, this summit should serve to reiterate our commitments to the MDGs and lead our Governments to intensify their efforts and consolidate a more dynamic partnership to overcome hurdles and speed up progress in achieving the Goals for a more just world of solidarity. The outcome of our work here must be a commitment to keeping our promises.

The Acting Chair: I would like to reiterate that time is running out. I ask speakers to be considerate of those who follow them.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mamadou Tangara, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad of the Gambia.

Mr. Tangara (Gambia): It is indeed a great privilege for me to stand here to deliver the message of His Excellency Al Hadji Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh, President of the Republic of the Gambia.

"It is 10 years since the holding of the Millennium Summit, in September 2000, when we, who constitute the leadership of the Member States of this body, adopted the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2). That Declaration provides a framework for international collaboration in meeting goals and targets to address poverty and environmental challenges, while putting all countries on the path towards lasting socio-economic growth and development. It was most important for a twenty-first century world where millions of people have their lives and true dignity threatened by poverty, hunger and disease and die of the hopelessness, despair and destitution that come with those threats.

"Ten years on, we are gathered here again to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress made and, with five years to go to the target date of 2015, to map out a course for accelerated action to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

"It is heartening that, despite their general lack of resources, many of the world's poorest countries have made some progress, signifying the importance that we in that group of nations attach, and will continue to attach, to the MDGs and their attainment in record time. However, our ability to register more progress was openly challenged by the global surge in food prices and the financial crisis, with the attendant consequences that those have on mobilizing resources and enhancing general resource flows.

"I am happy to inform the Assembly that since the Summit, the Government of the Gambia has not relented in considering poverty reduction and enhanced growth as the cornerstone of our national development priorities. Over that period, despite resource gaps, we have mobilized a significant level of partnership with genuine friends of the Gambia, both bilaterally and at the multilateral level, in the strides taken so far in that direction.

"Those include strengthening our national planning capacities with the creation of a

planning commission in December 2006 and the recent transformation of that commission into a ministry in charge of directing national planning efforts, using the MDG-based Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for the period 2007 to 2011, including the Vision 2020 development blueprint, as the basis. I would like to take this opportunity to applaud the support of all our development partners in this drive, especially that of United Nations agencies.

"With 70 per cent of my country's population dependant upon agriculture — a sector where the possibilities for large-scale earnings are generally lower than in other sectors of the economy — my Government will continue to promote investments that enhance agricultural productivity and earnings and create opportunities for enhanced increases in living standards for the poor.

"I should like to share with the Assembly that we have launched a back-to-the-land operation known as the Feed Yourself campaign. That effort is yielding benefits for us, as evidenced in the modest increase in food production, especially cereals, registered during the past season. It is also helping to make us one of the few countries of the world that is on track to meeting the target set in Goal 1 of halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. Similar advances have been made and will continue to be made with regards to all the MDGs.

"With regard to Goal 2, I wish to share the following achievements. We have a 77 per cent net enrollment ratio in primary education, with 62.9 per cent of people who start in grade one making it to the last grade of primary education. With regard to gender parity, there are almost more girls than boys. That was made possible by the deliberate creation of a girls' education trust fund and the pioneering of the highly successful President's Empowerment of Girls Education Project, which is promoting broader enrolment and retention of girls in school.

"The Gambia continues to be committed to the ideals of gender equality and the empowerment of women. That is amply manifested in our commitment to international obligations, including, notably, in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women. Earlier this year, I signed into law the Women's Act 2010. Our successful hosting of the regional Beijing Plus 15 Conference in November of 2009 further demonstrates our respect for and commitment to the empowerment of women.

"The Gambia has made significant progress over the years in reducing infant and under-five mortality and is on track to meeting Targets 4.A and 5.A of Goals 4 and 5. However, we continue to grapple with the problems of combating preventable deaths due to malaria and tuberculosis and of putting in place a robust environmental sanitation system and a modern, state-of-the-art drainage infrastructure.

"With respect to the spread of HIV and AIDs, our approach includes strategies for enhanced access to treatment using a well-integrated national HIV/AIDS policy with pillars addressing home-based care, creating support groups, voluntary counseling and testing services, preventing mother-to-child transmission and providing antiretroviral therapy.

"The Gambia is a beneficiary of the Global Environment Facility, and, in response to growing environmental challenges, the Government has formulated and adopted the Gambia Environmental Action Plan (GEAP) as a framework for enhancing environmental management. To complement the GEAP, other cross-cutting policies and strategies dealing with environmental issues have been developed in the Gambia.

"With support from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Gambia is exploring the possibility of promoting renewable energy to reduce the impact of carbon dioxide emissions on the environment and encouraging a deeper private-public sector partnership. The Gambia is currently implementing the first phase of a participatory slum upgrading programme, funded by the European Commission, in response to the needs of urban slum dwellers, a Target of Goal 7.

"With regard to the global partnership for development, the Gambia received external debt relief upon reaching the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative decision point in 2007. It was approved for a budget support programme with the World Bank and the African Development Bank in 2009, as well as for a budget support programme from the European Union, foreign direct investment and the Global Fund. All this places it favourably to develop a stronger partnership and collaboration with the rest of the world, with a view to accelerated socio-economic growth and development. I recognize, though, that the global financial meltdown has eroded the gains of debt relief and reduced funding from its traditional development sources.

"Even though the Gambia is among the best performers in Africa insofar as progress towards meeting some of the MDG Targets is concerned, there daunting tasks and challenges lie ahead in the countdown to 2015. The Gambia intends to respond to those challenges in a more structured and targeted manner through a programme for accelerated growth and employment that will run from 2012 to 2014.

"My delegation's comment on the draft outcome document (A/65/L.1) being tabled at this High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs is that the document is indeed a great item for accelerated action. However, we wish to add our voice to those of other Governments to urge that it reflect a stronger commitment to specific actions set out in the document, as well as realistic timelines and requisite financing to deliver on those very important Goals.

"It is high time that the wealthier countries provide added and committed assistance to less endowed and poverty-stricken nations. It is high time to prove to all those for whom the MDGs must provide a true and realistic meaning to their life that we meant what we promised them. I therefore wish to urge that our discussion during this Meeting should be guided and directed towards addressing the MDG promise that come 2015, the poor are able to celebrate an historic millennium victory.

"I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the strong and consistent support that the Gambia has been receiving from the United Nations system agencies towards achieving the MDGs and from all our partners — from non-governmental organizations, civil society and faith-based organizations to friendly countries, including the Republic of China on Taiwan, which has our respect and recognition for its development experience with the global community.

"I wish to remark that while there are certainly are many challenges to achieving all of the MDGs, there is no other way than to recognize that the Goals represent a true hope for the hundreds of millions of poor and largely marginalized people across the world who yearn for a better world than the one they live in.

"Taiwan is an active player in international cooperation and development, given the volume of assistance that it provides in support of public projects and towards social, agriculture and private sector development. It is for this reason that the Gambia wishes to reiterate the need for the United Nations to find ways to accept Taiwan's participation so that the MDG Targets can be better achieved."

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Brunei Darussalam.

Prince Mohamed Bolkiah (Brunei Darussalam): I bring the best wishes of His Majesty the Sultan and the people of Brunei Darussalam, together with our warmest greeting to our fellow Members of the United Nations. I congratulate the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session on his election and wish him great success in the coming year. I also express my appreciation to Mr. Treki for his work over the past year, and my thanks to the Secretary-General and the United Nations agencies for their help, advice and expertise.

Like every country, we have learned several lessons in our work over the last 10 years, and I would briefly like to go through the main ones.

First, we have learned how the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) can bring our people together — our Governments, our business people, our professionals and our families and communities. So far, the Goals have done this very successfully. We are starting to feel new confidence in the future, and I

think we are less frightened by many challenges. As a result, our Government has strengthened policy and legislation, our public and private sectors are working together in health and education, and all ministries have set long-term development programmes. When we add all this to our comprehensive housing programme and our commitment to the rule of law, we can see that working towards the goals has done a great deal to strengthen social welfare.

Another lesson has taught us a lot about ourselves. We are a developing nation, and, more than that, we are a small one. We cannot do everything on our own, and we need others. This is why our regional association is very important to us. It has a great role to play and I think that is because it also has a development target. This challenges us to become what we call an Association of Southeast Asian Nations community. In fact, the immediate target date is the same as that for the Millennium Goals, 2015. Our method is to establish what we describe as connectivity, and I am sure that nothing will give us a stronger connection than achieving the Millennium Goals together as partners. After all, the Goals are at the heart of any real community, and the lesson here is an inspiring one: it shows they can be both a national and a regional guide.

There is, however, another lesson we are still trying to learn. It concerns the targets that we are finding difficult to reach. This is particularly the case with the natural environment in general and, specifically, biodiversity. Even though we have signed key international agreements, I must say that we have a very real problem. It can be summed up quite simply. We do not know enough. Statistics often contradict each other. Basic facts are frequently disputed. Even when we are satisfied with the information we get, we cannot implement recommendations. We can do the planning and pass the legislation; we can even provide much of the physical infrastructure. But there is very little else we can do if we do not have enough highly skilled people.

This is always going to be a big problem because of our low population and our small domestic market. So, unless that situation changes, some of the goals will be very hard to achieve. This means that success cannot depend entirely on each individual country. As many speakers here have said, deep levels of cooperation are called for, especially in sharing ideas and expertise. We see this as the biggest single lesson we have learned in the last 10 years. We are very pleased that the United Nations is promoting this, and we will do whatever we can to strengthen these efforts.

Finally, I would like to thank the Co-Chairs very much for bringing us together this week. We much appreciate the chance it gives us to learn from each other and to judge our efforts to date from an international perspective.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ali Jarbawi, Minister for Planning and Administrative Development of the Palestinian Authority.

Mr. Jarbawi (Palestine): In paragraph 2 of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, world leaders acknowledged their collective responsibility

> "to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. As leaders we have a duty therefore to all the world's people, especially the most vulnerable and, in particular, the children of the world, to whom the future belongs" (*resolution 55/2*).

We must also recall that world leaders rededicated themselves to support all efforts to uphold "the right to self-determination of peoples which remain under colonial domination and foreign occupation" (*resolution 55/2, para. 4*).

Palestine is heartened by this commitment, as we continue to strive for the realization of our just national aspiration for freedom and independence. The Palestinian National Authority is determined to deliver social justice and equality to the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. We are committed to adhering to the principles enshrined in the Millennium Declaration and to promoting the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Palestine. We are doing this despite the prolonged military occupation of our land by Israel. This is an illegal occupation, it is the major obstacle to our attainment of the MDGs, and it must end.

As requested by the United Nations, we reported our progress towards achieving the MDGs in a report published in June. Universal primary education and gender equality in education have already been achieved, and we are making great strides in improving maternal health care. These achievements have been made despite the fact that children and pregnant

women are still routinely held up at Israeli military checkpoints as they travel to school and health-care facilities, while many of them are completely denied access to those vital social institutions.

Moreover, improvements in basic services are being achieved through significant and ongoing investment in public infrastructure, with the generous support of the international donor community. Regrettably, however, these essential investments are often obstructed, and sometimes indefinitely delayed, by a complex web of restrictions imposed by the occupation that undermines our development in all sectors.

In addition to imposing restrictions on Palestinian governance and socioeconomic development, the Israeli occupation authority, and Israeli settlers, are also systematically exploiting our natural resources to the detriment of the Palestinian people. According to a World Bank report issued last year, per capita withdrawals by Palestinians from our water sources amounted to only one quarter of the amount withdrawn by Israelis. The same report concluded that, by regional standards, Palestinians have the least access to fresh water. This is just another example of how the occupation breeds injustice and inequality, with significant negative social, economic and political ramifications. In this regard, in concluding our MDG progress report, we have highlighted our firm belief that if the occupation ends and we are able to consolidate Government in our own sovereign and independent State, we can not only meet but in fact exceed most of the MDGs before 2015.

Furthermore, in the Gaza Strip, as reported by the International Monetary Fund this week, the unemployment rate now stands at 37 per cent — the highest in the world. The private sector in Gaza is still denied basic raw materials needed to rebuild the businesses destroyed by the Israeli military aggression of 2010 and 2009 and the ongoing illegal blockade. In the West Bank, however, where our private sector is beginning to recover and is creating jobs and sustainable livelihoods, the unemployment rate is at 16 per cent — its lowest level since the turn of the millennium.

We all know that high unemployment rates drive poverty, hunger and other serious social problems. If the current status quo is allowed to continue, the socioeconomic inequalities that exist between Gaza and the West Bank will widen to unprecedented proportions, with tragic consequences for the civilian population, particularly children, women and the abject poor. The blockade on the Gaza Strip must be completely lifted and we must be allowed to begin its recovery and reconstruction. Otherwise, not only will our path towards the attainment of the MDGs continue to be obstructed but we shall likely regress.

In conclusion, I must draw your attention to the fact that, wherever we look across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, whether in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, or the Gaza Strip, we see human suffering, injustice and inequality, entrenched by years of occupation and colonization. We also see vast challenges to our development as a result of the occupation's illegal policies and practices.

This suffering, injustice and inequality must end. We are committed to ensuring that Palestinian families — men, women and children — enjoy their human rights, equal rights and equal opportunities. We are striving to do so in line with international law and the true spirit of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and will continue to move forward on this path.

We believe that equality and justice for all our citizens can only be achieved in an independent State of our own, in which we can live in freedom and dignity. We know this is a vision we share with the international community, and Palestine expresses its sincere gratitude to all nations that have supported us in this just endeavour. Your support is needed now more than ever as we push forward to complete the process of developing and strengthening the institutions of our State before next year's General Assembly.

This is the cornerstone of our aspirations to independence and inclusion as a permanent member in the family of nations, in which we will play an active and positive role in upholding the rule of law and fulfilling shared goals, including the MDGs.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alberto D'Alotto, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Argentine Republic.

Mr. D'Alotto (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): When, in the year 2000, the international community met in this very city at the Millennium Summit, a significant step was taken on the path towards a more

just and equitable world. For the first time, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established basic, objective, concrete and tangible parameters for development and the eradication of poverty. These parameters then became measurable goals.

In making a commitment to achieving the Goals, we acted with the firm conviction that a collective effort, cooperation and solidarity were essential to resolve the most urgent and serious development problems affecting the world's peoples. They were ambitious goals in some cases, but attainable. Above all, they were crucial in the quest for human dignity and respect for fundamental human rights.

Although the goals were ambitious for many Member States, it is also true that some of the agreed goals set the bar too low for developed countries and many middle-income countries. For this reason, the Argentine Republic assigned itself a few additional parameters.

Thus we identified job creation as a distinct goal. We considered this crucial in our efforts to achieve positive results, which we have in fact attained thus far, and as a central element in a set of policies which would enable us to make substantial progress in reducing extreme poverty and poverty and in improving all social indicators.

In 2007, Argentina reached the unemployment goal which had been set for 2015. Furthermore, despite the international crisis which has recently affected labour markets in the majority of countries, Argentina managed to maintain employment levels, and the unemployment rate remained below the 2015 target. In the Argentine strategy, the importance of productive and quality work was complemented by a decisive direct income transfer policy, which found maximum expression in the launching of a social protection programme of universal income for children, which today covers more than 3.6 million minors. These results have been more than promising.

Furthermore, from the outset, the Argentine Government set up specialized MDG structures within the office of the presidency, thus undertaking a joint and multidisciplinary effort involving all the different departments of our public administration.

In reviewing the indicators of Argentina's progress towards the MDGs, I would like to point out the following. With respect to the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, the goal of reducing poverty by at least 20 per cent by 2015 was reached in the second half of 2008, when was already below 15 per cent. At that time, the rate of extreme poverty had dropped by 84 per cent to 4.4 per cent.

With respect to education: besides the achievement of universal primary education, which was one of the most accessible goals for our country, given the fact that primary education has been mandatory and free of charge for more than a century, we have made considerable progress towards even more demanding goals, in particular, those for secondary education, where we have reached some intermediate targets.

In the fight against HIV/AIDS, by 2007 the rates had decreased to the levels targeted for 2015. We should also point out that Argentina has made considerable progress in the fight against other endemic diseases, such as tuberculosis and trypanosomoiasis, which we included within this goal.

With a view to ensuring a sustainable environment, Argentina has set targets for 2015 requiring all national policies and programmes to integrate the principles of sustainable development. We are also remedying the loss of natural resources, reducing by two thirds the percentage of the population that have no access to drinking water or to sewage. In addition, we have reduced by half the percentage of people who have substandard housing or unacceptable living conditions.

We have been successful in reducing child mortality, both the general rate and the rate of those under five, by two thirds. Maternal mortality has been decreased by 75 per cent.

In the Millennium Declaration, on the basis of central values and principles which give meaning to multilateralism, we reiterate the commitment to strengthen respect for human dignity and to promote better living conditions for all. Since 2000, we have periodically met to review the progress we have achieved in this undertaking, including at the 2005 Millennium Summit.

A decade from the establishment of the MDGs and only five years from the deadline to attain them, we should carry out a candid and thorough review and readjust the course of our action if necessary. We do not believe in magic or easy formulas. Rather we

believe in the virtues of multilateralism, the power of solidarity and the value of resolve, in order to honour our commitments. We believe in the multiplyier effect of good p.actices and successful results.

If we are to be successful, this is not an undertaking in which countries can go it alone. For this reason, my country is convinced that we need to strengthen integration and cooperation processes, particularly in the area of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Union of South American Nations.

For these reasons, it is our hope that the nations represented here, and in particular those with the most resources, the developed countries, will honour the commitments that they made in different forums as a result of the Millennium Declaration, in terms of both financial assistance and international cooperation. If they do not, many of the efforts that have been made thus far to reach the Goals by 2015 will be seriously jeopardized.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Afelee F. Pita, chair of the delegation of Tuvalu.

Mr. Pita (Tuvalu): Earlier this month, Tuvalu commemorated the tenth anniversary of its membership in the United Nations, as the 189th Member State. Our admission as a full member of this body was an expression of trust, hope and commitment to the noble ideals and fundamental pillars of the United Nations. Our hope was also underpinned by and coincided with the adoption of the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) by world leaders at the United Nations Millennium Summit held 10 years ago. As one of the smallest Members of the United Nations, Tuvalu considers the adoption of the Millennium Declaration — with its promise of an agreed set of time-bound and measurable goals and targets for combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women — to be a critical challenge.

Today, we are pleased to participate in this High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and fully recognize the need to review and accelerate progress, renew our commitments and rebuild our partnerships to achieve the MDGs by 2015. We also see the need for this body to agree on an ambitious road map, with concrete actions to be pursued vigorously by Member States, as a way forward to achieve the MDGs by the target date.

From the perspective of Tuvalu, meeting the MDGs first requires the commitment of its Government to ensuring that the appropriate policies and systems are in place to facilitate that task. Secondly, not only must such commitment be complemented and supported by development partners, but, more importantly, the developed countries must deliver their commitments in a timely manner.

In the case of Tuvalu, despite our limited resources, coupled with our unique challenges as a small island developing State (SIDS) and a least developed country (LDC), and thus among those most vulnerable to external shocks and environmental disasters, we have been able to make at least some progress towards achieving some of the MDGs during the past 10 years.

In that context, our population does not suffer from extreme poverty and hunger. We have very high participation rates in primary education. The participation of women in our society is prominent, although representation in Parliament remains an issue. Progress in reducing child mortality is somewhat slow. Access to adequate health care remains an issue. Similarly, improvements in maternal health care are also limited. With regard to combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, Tuvalu has been moderately successful, but there is room for significant improvement.

There is one very clear lesson that we have learned from our review of the MDGs. It relates to the fact that, while we have made progress towards achieving the MDGs, these successes can be easily and very quickly reversed by our particular economic and environmental vulnerability. In this context of economic vulnerability, the global financial and economic crisis has had an enormous adverse effect on Tuvalu's economy. Tuvalu's principal source of Government expenditure is through its trust fund, which is based on overseas investments. These investments were severely affected by the crisis and will take some time to recover. Furthermore, Government expenditure declined dramatically, and efforts to achieve the MDGs were therefore adversely affected. In a small island economy where there is little opportunity for internal investment, Tuvalu is

extremely vulnerable to economic circumstances well beyond its control.

Matched with the decline in income has been a rise in the cost of energy production. Importing fossil fuel to provide electricity for our population is a major drain on the economy of Tuvalu. We are in desperate need of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies that are appropriate to the conditions of Tuvalu. In this context, I would like to acknowledge the support of the Italian Government in assisting in the provision of solar energy for our main Government high school.

Another significant burden on Tuvalu's economic sustainability is the effect of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. At a recent maritime security meeting in Hawaii, it was noted that an estimated 20 per cent of the reported catch from the Pacific comes from IUU fishing. IUU fishing in our economic exclusive zone by distant-water fishing nations robs us of one of the few sources of foreign revenue available to us. Addressing the issue of IUU fishing is another crucial component of ensuring progress in our efforts to achieve the MDGs.

We all know that all of the MDGs are interrelated and that their achievement requires strong partnerships between developed and developing countries. This is articulated in MDG 8, which asserts collective responsibility for international cooperation and assistance to achieve all the MDGs. Unfortunately, Tuvalu's progress towards MDG 8 has been mixed.

In consideration of the broader aspects of international partnership, we must acknowledge with great dismay that the lack of progress in addressing climate change is one of the greatest challenges to achieving the MDGs. Despite this undeniable fact, many key greenhouse gas-emitting countries are not taking substantive steps to reduce their production of greenhouse gases. We were deeply disappointed by the outcomes of the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December. The so-called Copenhagen Accord was a statement of discord. Promises of two years of funding for adaptation and mitigation in exchange for half-baked commitments to reducing emissions are not a recipe for long-term action to address climate change.

In this context, we need a strong signal from the major greenhouse gas-emitting countries that their Governments are committed to taking decisive actions to address climate change. Without such commitment and action, we are unlikely to come anywhere near to meeting the MDGs by 2015, and may well slip backwards from the achievements we have made so far.

For Tuvalu, addressing climate change in a substantial way is fundamental for our sustainable development. We cannot allow the next conference in Cancún to be another failure like Copenhagen. Tuvalu is undoubtedly one of the countries most vulnerable in the world to the impacts of climate change, especially sea level rise. Our very survival is threatened by that phenomenon, and hence our progress towards achieving the MDGs is seriously challenged. As a small coral atoll nation, our entire existence is based on a natural and living system, and without its continuation our land would disappear.

In the context of MDG 8, Tuvalu strongly feels that, in addition to its traditional donors and development partners that are members of the United Nations, Taiwan plays a crucial and instrumental role in assisting many countries, including Tuvalu, in their efforts to achieve the MDGs. In the spirit of global cooperation and partnership, Taiwan's continuous endeavours in this regard should be fully recognized by the United Nations. Therefore, Tuvalu humbly calls upon the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies to find appropriate ways within their respective systems to accept and accommodate Taiwan's meaningful participation and contribution, so that the MDG targets can be better achieved.

As we look forward towards 2015, I would like to conclude with two key considerations. First, the unique situation and needs of SIDS and LDCs like Tuvalu must be given special attention. Despite the significant progress we have made in achieving some of the MDGs, our extreme vulnerability makes it highly likely that these achievements could easily be lost entirely, overnight.

Secondly, we must direct our attention to the responsibilities of the developed world. Much of the discussion around the MDGs has focused on developing countries and the actions they need to take to address their deficiencies in achieving the MDGs. Regrettably, little attention has been given to the clear role that the developed world needs to play to avoid exacerbating the problems of developing countries. Failure to address these issues will result in poor and small countries like Tuvalu bearing the burden.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Robert Guba Aisi, chairman of the delegation of Papua New Guinea.

Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea): On behalf of the Government of Papua New Guinea, I thank the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General for convening this summit to review our performance and look at ways to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In 2000, Papua New Guinea, along with 189 other Member States, signed the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), committing ourselves to achieving the eight Millennium Goals by 2015. Papua New Guinea has adapted and localized the MDGs by establishing 15 targets and 67 indicators within our medium-term development strategy for the period 2005-2010. Our efforts to implement the MDGs are reflected in our first national MDG report, of 2004. Our second MDG report was completed recently and is under review. Those reports indicate that we have been able to make significant progress on some of the national MDGS targets, especially on Goals 2 and 4. Other MDGs remain works in progress and include challenges.

In order to attain the MDGs, the Government Papua New Guinea is currently focused on a 20-year strategy of transforming the rural sector, where 86 per cent of the country's population lives. Our country's development strategic plan for the period 2010-2030 has identified 10 areas, or corridors, of poverty in the country. The aim is to transform those corridors into robust socio-economic areas with improved basic services, including roads and vital infrastructure linkages, within the next 20 years.

Our aim is to achieve a much higher level of human development in the next 20 years. By 2030, we want to become a middle-income economy, with our human development index improving from its current 0.51 to 0.7, along with much higher gross domestic product per capita. Papua New Guinea's development strategic plan and medium-term development plan for the period 2011-2015 are aligned to attain those objectives. It is within that context that our country will achieve the MDGs. In doing so, we have made the MDGs part of our national development policy. In the remaining five years, Papua New Guinea will scale up its efforts in an attempt to meet the 2015 deadline.

In addition to the efforts I have mentioned, important initiatives are being pursued that should help us make progress along the path to achieving the MDGs. Those initiatives include the current proposal to appoint 22 women representatives to our National Parliament, our universal basic education policy, the creation of the Office and Ministry of Climate Change, a proactive approach to forging partnerships with civil society organizations, and the identification of the 10 corridors of poverty, to which I have just referred.

Gender equality is important to attaining MDG 3. In that respect, a proposal is before the National Parliament to appoint 22 women representatives. Once adopted, that proposal will empower women to participate in the political decision-making process of our country.

Papua New Guinea is committed to up-scaling its efforts to achieve MDG 2, on universal primary education. To that end, the Government has introduced its universal primary education policy and is working to endure free primary-level education for all children by 2015. The Government is committing substantial funds every year to realize this important policy, which will contribute to attaining the MDGs.

Like other countries, Papua New Guinea's development agenda is challenged by climate change and sea level rise. The Carteret Islands, in Bougainville, and the Duke of York Islands, in East New Britain Province, are two cases in which our islands are seriously affected by sea level rise. Therefore, addressing the issue of climate change is important, both through adaptation and mitigation projects as well as by protecting our vast tropical rainforests. The Government has created the Office of Climate Change and recently appointed a Minster for Climate Change. That decision by the Government is targeted towards the achievement of MDG 7.

A large percentage of health and education services is provided by churches. The Government has engaged civil society and churches by signing development partnerships. Funding those partnerships is now catered for through the national Government's annual budget.

The role of the private sector is also important to the achievement of the MDGs, in particular in creating employment and raising the standard of living of our people. To that end, the Government has adopted a

policy of public-private partnerships to facilitate the private sector's contribution.

The challenges we face in pursuing our MDGs are compounded by the difficult terrain and physical landscape of Papua New Guinea. More than 86 per cent of our people live in rural areas. Infrastructure, human resources and rural development are therefore national priorities. Since 2008, deliberate efforts through the national budget have been focused on rural programmes. That has been done through our district services improvement programme, which includes district markets, rural water supplies, agriculture, rural telecommunications and the provision of energy, including renewable energy. So far, about $500 million has been spent on our rural interventions programme.

Papua New Guinea is committed to continuing the programme, which will improve the quality of life of our rural population. In that connection, we acknowledge the statement made by Ms. Helen Clark, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, about the importance of improving accessibility to basic services for the rural majority. We have demonstrated our commitment by funding our pro-MDG programmes, simply because it is our development priority as well.

In the next five years, the Government of Papua New Guinea will commit substantial funds through its medium-term development plan for the period 2011-2015 to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs. Four provinces have been identified as pilot provinces to try out new programmes aimed at fast-tracking the MDGs. We would like to remind our development partners of, and encourage them to implement, our joint commitments under the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action to pool and align our resources so that we can fast-track the achievement of the MDGs and ensure their sustainability beyond 2015.

Lastly, issues of regional collaboration and partnership, such as South-South cooperation, are critically important. Those principles were articulated at the Asia-Pacific ministerial meeting on the MDGs held in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 3 and 4 August, which culminated in the adoption of the Jakarta declaration, which my delegation fully supports and commends for consideration by the General Assembly. We thank Indonesia for its leadership in that regard.

The meeting rose at 2.50 p.m.